

On Marriage and Concupiscence

By Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

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IN TWO BOOKS, ADDRESSED TO THE COUNT VALERIUS

BY AURELIUS AUGUSTIN, BISHOP OF HIPPO; WRITTEN IN 419 AND 420,

On Marriage and Concupiscence (Companion Letter)

A letter addressed to the Count Valerius, on Augustin's forwarding to him what he calls his first book "On Marriage and Concupiscence."

To the illustrious and deservedly eminent Lord and his most dearly beloved son in the [love](#) of [Christ](#), Valerius, Augustin sends greeting in the Lord.

1. While I was chafing at the long disappointment of receiving no acknowledgments from your Highness of the many letters which I had written to you, I all at once received three letters from your Grace,—one by the hand of my fellow [bishop](#) Vindemialis, which was not meant for me only, and two, soon afterwards, through my brother [presbyter](#) Firmus. This [holy](#) man, who is bound to me, as you may have ascertained from his own lips, by the ties of a most intimate [love](#), had much conversation with me about your excellence, and gave me undoubted [proofs](#) of his complete [knowledge](#) of your character "in the bowels of Christ;" [Philippians 1:8](#) by these means he had sight, not only of the letters of which the fore-mentioned [bishop](#) and he himself had been the bearers, but also of those which we expressed our disappointment at not having received. Now his information respecting you was all the more pleasant to us, inasmuch as he gave me to understand, what it was out of your power to do, that you would not, even at my earnest request for an answer, become the extoller of your own praises, contrary to the permission of [Holy Scripture](#). [Proverbs 27:2](#) But I ought myself to hesitate to write to you in this strain, lest I should incur the suspicion of flattering you, my illustrious and deservedly eminent lord and dearly beloved son in the [love](#) of [Christ](#).

2. Now, as to your praises in [Christ](#), or rather Christ's praises in you, see what delight and [joy](#) it was to me to hear of them from him, who could neither deceive me because of his

fidelity to me, nor be [ignorant](#) of them by reason of his friendship with you. But other testimony, which though inferior in amount and certainty has still reached my ear from various quarters, assures me how sound and catholic is your [faith](#); how devout your hope of the future; how great your [love](#) to [God](#) and the brethren; how [humble](#) your mind amid the highest honours, as you do not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living [God](#), and art rich in good works; [1 Timothy 6:17](#) how your house is a rest and comfort of the [saints](#), and a terror to [evil](#)-doers; how great is your care that no man lay snares for Christ's members (either among His old enemies or those of more recent days), although he use Christ's name as a cloak for his wiles; and at the same time, though you give no quarter to the [error](#) of these enemies, how provident you are to secure their [salvation](#). This and the like, we frequently hear, as I have already said, even from others; but at the present moment we have, by means of the above-mentioned brother, received a fuller and more trustworthy [knowledge](#).

3. Touching, however, the subject of conjugal purity, that we might be able to bestow our commendation and [love](#) upon you for it, could we possibly listen to the information of any one but some bosom friend of your own, who had no mere superficial acquaintance with you, but [knew](#) your innermost life? Concerning, therefore, this excellent gift of God to you, I am delighted to converse with you with more frankness and at greater length. I am quite sure that I shall not prove burdensome to you, even if I send you a prolix treatise, the perusal of which will only ensure a longer converse between us. For this have I discovered, that amidst your manifold and weighty cares you pursue your reading with ease and pleasure; and that you take great delight in any little performances of ours, even if they are addressed to other [persons](#), whenever they have chanced to fall into your hands. Whatever, therefore, is addressed to *yourself*, in which I can speak to you as it were personally, you will deign both to notice with greater attention, and to receive with a higher pleasure. From the perusal, then, of this letter, turn to the book which I send with it. It will in its very commencement, in a more convenient manner, intimate to your Reverence the reason, both why it has been written, and why it has been submitted specially to your consideration.

On Marriage and Concupiscence (Book I)

Wherein He expounds the peculiar and natural blessings of marriage. He shows that among these blessings must not be reckoned fleshly concupiscence; insomuch as this is wholly [evil](#), such as does not proceed from the very nature of marriage, but is an accident thereof arising from original [sin](#). This [evil](#), notwithstanding, is rightly employed by marriage for the procreation of children. But, as the result of this concupiscence, it comes to pass that, even from the lawful marriage of the children of [God](#), men are not born children of [God](#), but of the world, and are bound with the chain of [sin](#), although their [parents](#) have been liberated therefrom by [grace](#); and are led captive by the [devil](#), if they be not in like manner rescued by the self-same [grace](#) of [Christ](#). He explains how it is that concupiscence remains in the [baptized](#) in act though not in guilt. He teaches, that by the [sanctity](#) of [baptism](#), not merely this original guilt, but all other [sins](#) of men whatever, are

taken away. He lastly quotes the authority of Ambrose to show that the [evil](#) of concupiscence must be distinguished from the good of marriage.

Chapter 1.—Concerning the Argument of This Treatise.

Our new [heretics](#), my dearest son Valerius, who maintain that infants born in the flesh have no need of that medicine of Christ whereby [sins](#) are healed, are constantly affirming, in their excessive [hatred](#) of us, that we condemn marriage and that divine procedure by which God creates human beings by means of [men](#) and [women](#), inasmuch as we assert that they who are born of such a union contract that original [sin](#) of which the apostle says, "By one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all [sinned](#);" and because we do not deny, that of whatever kind of [parents](#) they are born, they are still under the [devil's](#) dominion, unless they be born again in [Christ](#), and by His [grace](#) be removed from the power of darkness and translated into His kingdom, [Colossians 1:15](#) who willed not to be born from the same union of the two sexes. Because, then, we affirm this doctrine, which is contained in the oldest and unvarying rule of the catholic [faith](#), these propounders of the novel and perverse dogma, who assert that there is no [sin](#) in infants to be washed away in the laver of regeneration, [Titus 3:5](#) in their unbelief or [ignorance](#) calumniate us, as if we condemned marriage, and as if we asserted to be the [devil's](#) work what is God's own work—the human being which is born of marriage. Nor do they reflect that the good of marriage is no more impeachable on account of the original [evil](#) which is derived therefrom, than the [evil](#) of [adultery](#) and fornication is excusable on account of the natural good which is born of them. For as [sin](#) is the work of the [devil](#), from whencesoever contracted by infants; so man is the work of [God](#), from whencesoever born. Our purpose, therefore, in this book, so far as the Lord vouchsafes us in His help, is to distinguish between the [evil](#) of carnal concupiscence from which man who is born therefrom contracts original [sin](#), and the good of marriage. For there would have been none of this shame-producing concupiscence, which is impudently praised by impudent men, if man had not previously [sinned](#); while as to marriage, it would still have [existed](#) even if no man had [sinned](#), since the procreation of children in the body that belonged to that life would have been effected without that malady which in "the body of this death" [Romans 7:24](#) cannot be separated from the process of procreation.

Chapter 2. [II.]—Why This Treatise Was Addressed to Valerius.

Now there are three very special reasons, which I will briefly indicate, why I wished to write to you particularly on this subject. One is, because by the gift of Christ you are a strict observer of conjugal [chastity](#). Another is, because by your great care and diligence you have effectually withstood those profane novelties which we are resisting in our present discussion. The third is, because of my learning that something which they had committed to writing had found its way into your hands; and although in your robust [faith](#) you could despise such an attempt, it is still a good thing for us also to [know](#) how to bring aid to our [faith](#) by defending it. For the Apostle Peter instructs us to be "ready always to give an answer to every one that asks us a reason of the [faith](#) and hope that is in us;" and the [Apostle Paul](#) says, "Let your speech be always with [grace](#), seasoned with [salt](#), that

you may [know](#) how ye ought to answer every man." [Colossians 4:6](#) These are the motives which chiefly impel me to hold such converse with you in this volume, as the Lord shall enable me. I have never liked, indeed, to intrude the perusal of any of my [humble](#) labours on any eminent person, who is like yourself conspicuous to all from the elevation of his office, without his own request,—especially when he is not blessed with the enjoyment of a dignified retirement, but is still occupied in the public duties of a soldier's profession; this has always seemed to me to savour more impertinence than of respectful esteem. If, then, I have incurred censure of this kind, while acting on the reasons which I have now mentioned, I crave the favour of your forgiveness, and kindly regard to the following arguments.

Chapter 3 [III.]—Conjugal Chastity the Gift of God.

That [chastity](#) in the married state is God's gift, is shown by the most [blessed Paul](#), when, speaking on this very subject, he says: "But I would that all [men](#) were even as I myself: but every man has his proper gift of [God](#), one after this manner, and another after that." [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) Observe, he tells us that this gift is from [God](#); and although he classes it below that continence in which he would have all [men](#) to be like himself, he still describes it as a gift of [God](#). Whence we understand that, when these precepts are given to us in order that we should do them, nothing else is stated than that there ought to be within us our own will also for receiving and having them. When, therefore, these are shown to be gifts of [God](#), it is meant that they must be sought from Him if they are not already possessed; and if they are possessed, thanks must be given to Him for the possession; moreover, that our own wills have but small avail for seeking, obtaining, and holding fast these gifts, unless they be assisted by God's [grace](#).

Chapter 4.—A Difficulty as Regards the Chastity of Unbelievers. None But a Believer is Truly a Chaste Man.

What, then, have we to say when conjugal [chastity](#) is discovered even in some unbelievers? Must it be said that they [sin](#), in that they make a bad use of a gift of [God](#), in not restoring it to the worship of Him from whom they received it? Or must these endowments, perchance, be not regarded as gifts of God at all, when they are not [believers](#) who exercise them; according to the apostle's sentiment, when he says, "Whatsoever is not of [faith](#) is [sin](#)?" [Romans 14:23](#) But who would dare to say that a gift of God is [sin](#)? For the [soul](#) and the body, and all the natural endowments which are implanted in the [soul](#) and the body, even in the [persons](#) of sinful men, are still gifts of [God](#); for it is God who made them, and not they themselves. When it is said, "Whatsoever is not of [faith](#) is [sin](#)," only those things are meant which men themselves do. When men, therefore, do without [faith](#) those things which seem to appertain to conjugal [chastity](#), they do them either to please men, whether themselves or others, or to avoid incurring such troubles as are incidental to [human nature](#) in those things which they corruptly desire, or to pay service to devils. Sins are not really resigned, but some [sins](#) are overpowered by other [sins](#). God forbid, then, that a man be [truly](#) called chaste who observes connubial fidelity to his wife from any other motive than devotion to the [true](#) God.

Chapter 5 [IV.]—The Natural Good of Marriage. All Society Naturally Repudiates a Fraudulent Companion. What is True Conjugal Purity? No True Virginity and Chastity Except in Devotion to True Faith.

The union, then, of male and female for the purpose of procreation is the natural good of marriage. But he makes a bad use of this good who uses it bestially, so that his intention is on the gratification of [lust](#), instead of the desire of offspring. Nevertheless, in sundry animals unendowed with reason, as, for instance, in most birds, there is both preserved a certain kind of confederation of pairs, and a social combination of skill in nest-building; and their mutual division of the periods for cherishing their eggs and their alternation in the labor of feeding their young, give them the appearance of so acting, when they mate, as to be intent rather on securing the continuance of their kind than on gratifying [lust](#). Of these two, the one is the likeness of man in a brute; the other, the likeness of the brute in man. With respect, however, to what I ascribed to the [nature](#) of marriage, that the male and the female are united together as associates for procreation, and consequently do not defraud each other (forasmuch as every associated state has a natural abhorrence of a fraudulent companion), although even men without [faith](#) possess this palpable blessing of nature, yet, since they use it not in [faith](#), they only turn it to [evil](#) and [sin](#). In like manner, therefore, the marriage of [believers](#) converts to the use of righteousness that carnal concupiscence by which "the flesh [lusts](#) against the Spirit." [Galatians 5:17](#) For they entertain the firm purpose of generating offspring to be regenerated—that the children who are born of them as "children of the world" may be born again and become "sons of [God](#)." Wherefore all [parents](#) who do not beget children with this intention, this will, this purpose, of transferring them from being members of the first man into being members of [Christ](#), but boast as unbelieving [parents](#) over unbelieving children,—however circumspect they be in their cohabitation, studiously limiting it to the begetting of children,—really have no conjugal [chastity](#) in themselves. For inasmuch as [chastity](#) is a [virtue](#), hating unchastity as its contrary [vice](#), and as all the [virtues](#) (even those whose operation is by means of the body) have their seat in the [soul](#), how can the body be in any [true](#) sense said to be chaste, when the [soul](#) itself is committing fornication against the [true](#) God? Now such fornication the [holy](#) psalmist censures when he says: "For, lo, they that are far from You shall perish: You have destroyed all them that go a whoring from You." There is, then, no [true chastity](#), whether conjugal, or vidual, or virginal, except that which devotes itself to [true faith](#). For though [consecrated virginity](#) is rightly preferred to marriage, yet what [Christian](#) in his sober mind would not prefer catholic [Christian women](#) who have been even more than once married, to not only vestals, but also to [heretical virgins](#)? So great is the avail of [faith](#), of which the apostle says, "Whatsoever is not of [faith](#) is [sin](#);" [Romans 14:23](#) and of which it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Without [faith](#) it is impossible to please God." [Hebrews 11:6](#)

Chapter 6 [V.]—The Censuring of Lust is Not a Condemnation of Marriage; Whence Comes Shame in the Human Body. Adam and Eve Were Not Created Blind; Meaning of Their "Eyes Being Opened."

Now, this being the real state of the question, they undoubtedly [err](#) who suppose that, when fleshly [lust](#) is censured, marriage is condemned; as if the malady of concupiscence was the outcome of marriage and not of [sin](#). Were not those first spouses, whose nuptials God blessed with the words, "Be fruitful and multiply," [Genesis 1:28](#) naked, and yet not ashamed? Why, then, did shame arise out of their members after [sin](#), except because an indecent motion arose from them, which, if men had not [sinned](#), would certainly never have [existed](#) in marriage? Or was it, forsooth, as some hold (who give little heed to what they read), that human beings were, like dogs, at first created blind; and—absurder still—obtained sight, not as dogs do, by growing, but by sinning? Far be it from us to entertain such an opinion. But they gather that opinion of theirs from reading: "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat: and the eyes of them both were opened, and they [knew](#) that they were naked." [Genesis 3:6-7](#) This accounts for the opinion of unintelligent [persons](#), that the eyes of the first man and [woman](#) were previously closed, because [Holy Scripture](#) testifies that they were then opened. Well, then, were Hagar's eyes, the handmaid of Sarah, previously shut, when, with her thirsty and sobbing child, she opened her eyes [Genesis 21:17-19](#) and saw the well? Or did those two [disciples](#), after the Lord's resurrection, walk in the way with Him with their eyes shut, since the [evangelist](#) says of them that "in the breaking of bread their eyes were opened, and they [knew](#) Him"? [Luke 24:31](#) What, therefore, is written concerning the first man and [woman](#), that "the eyes of them both were opened," [Genesis 3:7](#) we ought to understand as that they gave attention to perceiving and recognising the new state which had befallen their body. Now that their eyes were opened, their body appeared to them naked, and they [knew](#) it. If this were not the meaning, how, when the beast of the field and the fowls of the air were brought unto him, [Genesis 2:19](#) could Adam have given them names if his eyes were shut? He could not have done this without distinguishing them; and he could not distinguish them without seeing them. How, too, could the [woman](#) herself have been beheld so clearly by him when he said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh"? [Genesis 2:23](#) If, indeed, any one shall be so determined on cavilling as to insist that Adam might have acquired a discernment of these objects, not by sight but by touch, what explanation will he have to give of the passage wherein we are told how the [woman](#) "saw that the tree," from which she was about to pluck the forbidden fruit, "was pleasant for the eyes to behold"? [Genesis 3:6](#) No; "they were both naked, and were not ashamed," [Genesis 2:25](#) not because they had no eyesight, but because they perceived no reason to be ashamed in their members, which had all along been seen by them. For it is not said: They were both naked, *and [knew](#) it not*; but "they were not ashamed." Because, indeed, nothing had previously happened which was not lawful, so nothing had ensued which could [cause](#) them shame.

Chapter 7 [VI.]—Man's Disobedience Justly Requit in the Rebellion of His Own Flesh; The Blush of Shame for the Disobedient Members of the Body.

When the first man transgressed the law of [God](#), he began to have another law in his members which was repugnant to the law of his [mind](#), and he felt the [evil](#) of his own disobedience when he experienced in the disobedience of his flesh a most righteous retribution recoiling on himself. Such, then, was "the opening of his eyes" which the serpent had promised him in his [temptation Genesis 3:5](#)—the [knowledge](#), in fact, of something which he had better been [ignorant](#) of. Then, indeed, did man perceive within himself what he had done; then did he distinguish [evil](#) from good,—not by avoiding it, but by enduring it. For it certainly was not just that [obedience](#) should be rendered by his servant, that is, his body, to him, who had not [obeyed](#) his own Lord. Well, then, how significant is the fact that the eyes, and lips, and tongue, and hands, and feet, and the bending of back, and neck, and sides, are all placed within our power—to be applied to such operations as are suitable to them, when we have a body free from impediments and in a sound state of health; but when it must come to man's great function of the procreation of children the members which were expressly created for this purpose will not [obey](#) the direction of the will, but [lust](#) has to be waited for to set these members in motion, as if it had legal right over them, and sometimes it refuses to act when the mind wills, while often it acts against its will! Must not this bring the blush of shame over the freedom of the human will, that by its contempt of [God](#), its own Commander, it has lost all proper command for itself over its own members? Now, wherein could be found a more fitting demonstration of the just depravation of [human nature](#) by reason of its disobedience, than in the disobedience of those parts whence nature herself derives subsistence by succession? For it is by a special propriety that those parts of the body are designated as *natural*. This, then, was the reason why the first human pair, on experiencing in the flesh that motion which was indecent because disobedient, and on feeling the shame of their nakedness, covered these offending members with fig-leaves; [Genesis 3:7](#) in order that, at the very least, by the [will](#) of the ashamed offenders, a veil might be thrown over that which was put into motion without the [will](#) of those who wished it: and since shame arose from what indecently pleased, decency might be attained by concealment.

Chapter 8 [VII.]—The Evil of Lust Does Not Take Away the Good of Marriage.

Forasmuch, then, as the good of marriage could not be lost by the addition of this [evil](#), some imprudent [persons](#) suppose that this is not an added [evil](#), but something which appertains to the original good. A distinction, however, occurs not only to subtle reason, but even to the most ordinary natural judgment, which was both apparent in the case of the first man and [woman](#), and also holds good still in the case of married [persons](#) today. What they afterward effected in propagation,—that is the good of marriage; but what they first veiled through shame,—that is the [evil](#) of concupiscence, which everywhere shuns sight, and in its shame seeks privacy. Since, therefore, marriage effects some good even out of that [evil](#), it has whereof to [glory](#); but since the good cannot be effected without the

[evil](#), it has reason for feeling shame. The case may be illustrated by the example of a lame man. Suppose him to attain to some good object by limping after it, then, on the one hand, the attainment itself is not [evil](#) because of the [evil](#) of the man's lameness; nor, on the other hand, is the lameness good because of the goodness of the attainment. So, on the same principle, we ought not to condemn marriage because of the [evil](#) of [lust](#); nor must we praise [lust](#) because of the good of marriage.

Chapter 9 [VIII.]—This Disease of Concupiscence in Marriage is Not to Be a Matter of Will, But of Necessity; What Ought to Be the Will of Believers in the Use of Matrimony; Who is to Be Regarded as Using, and Not Succumbing To, the Evil of Concupiscence; How the Holy Fathers of the Old Testament Formerly Used Wives.

This disease of concupiscence is what the apostle refers to, when, speaking to married [believers](#), he says: "This is the [will](#) of [God](#), even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should [know](#) how to possess his vessel in sanctification and [honour](#); not in the disease of desire, even as the [Gentiles](#) which [know](#) not God." [The married believer, therefore, must not only not use another man's vessel, which is what they do who lust](#) after others' wives; but he must [know](#) that even his own vessel is not to be possessed in the disease of carnal concupiscence. And this counsel is not to be understood as if the apostle prohibited conjugal—that is to say, lawful and [honourable](#)—cohabitation; but so as that that cohabitation (which would have no adjunct of unwholesome [lust](#), were it not that man's perfect freedom of choice had become by preceding [sin](#) so disabled that it has this fatal adjunct) should not be a matter of will, but of necessity, without which, nevertheless, it would be impossible to attain to the fruition of the will itself in the procreation of children. And this wish is not in the marriages of [believers](#) determined by the purpose of having such children born as shall pass through life in this present world, but such as shall be born again in [Christ](#), and remain in Him for evermore. Now if this result should come about, the reward of a full felicity will spring from marriage; but if such result be not realized, there will yet ensue to the married pair the peace of their good will. Whosoever possesses his vessel (that is, his wife) with this intention of heart, certainly does not possess her in the "disease of desire," as the [Gentiles](#) which [know](#) not [God](#), but in sanctification and [honour](#), as [believers](#) who hope in [God](#). A man turns to use the [evil](#) of concupiscence, and is not overcome by it, when he bridles and restrains its rage, as it works in inordinate and indecorous motions; and never relaxes his hold upon it except when intent on offspring, and then controls and applies it to the carnal generation of children to be spiritually regenerated, not to the subjection of the spirit to the flesh in a sordid servitude. That the [holy](#) fathers of olden times after [Abraham](#), and before him, to whom God gave His testimony that "they pleased Him," thus used their wives, no one who is a [Christian](#) ought to [doubt](#), since it was permitted to certain individuals amongst them to have a plurality of wives, where the reason was for the multiplication of their offspring, not the desire of varying gratification.

Chapter 10 [IX.]—Why It Was Sometimes Permitted that a Man Should Have Several Wives, Yet No Woman Was Ever Allowed to Have More Than One Husband. Nature Prefers Singleness in Her Dominations.

Now, if to the [God](#) of our fathers, who is likewise our [God](#), such a plurality of wives had not been displeasing for the purpose that [lust](#) might have a fuller range of indulgence; then, on such a supposition, the [holy women](#) also ought each to have rendered service to several husbands. But if any [woman](#) had so acted, what feeling but that of a disgraceful concupiscence could impel her to have more husbands, seeing that by such licence she could not have more children? That the good purpose of marriage, however, is better promoted by one husband with one wife, than by a husband with several wives, is shown plainly enough by the very first union of a married pair, which was made by the Divine Being Himself, with the intention of marriages taking their beginning therefrom, and of its affording to them a more [honourable](#) precedent. In the advance, however, of the [human race](#), it came to pass that to certain good men were united a plurality of good wives,—many to each; and from this it would seem that moderation sought rather unity on one side for dignity, while nature permitted plurality on the other side for fecundity. For on natural principles it is more feasible for one to have dominion over many, than for many to have dominion over one. Nor can it be [doubted](#), that it is more consonant with the order of nature that men should bear rule over [women](#), than [women](#) over men. It is with this principle in view that the apostle says, "The head of the [woman](#) is the man;" [1 Corinthians 11:3](#) and, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." [Colossians 3:18](#) So also the Apostle Peter writes: "Even as Sara [obeyed Abraham](#), calling him lord." [1 Peter 3:6](#) Now, although the fact of the matter is, that while nature loves singleness in her dominations, but we may see plurality existing more readily in the subordinate portion of our race; yet for all that, it was at no time lawful for one man to have a plurality of wives, except for the purpose of a greater number of children springing from him. Wherefore, if one [woman](#) cohabits with several men, inasmuch as no increase of offspring accrues to her therefrom, but only a more frequent gratification of [lust](#), she cannot possibly be a wife, but only a harlot.

Chapter 11 [X.]—The Sacrament of Marriage; Marriage Indissoluble; The World's Law About Divorce Different from the Gospel's.

It is certainly not fecundity only, the fruit of which consists of offspring, nor [chastity](#) only, whose bond is fidelity, but also a certain sacramental bond in marriage which is recommended to [believers](#) in wedlock. Accordingly it is enjoined by the apostle: "Husbands, [love](#) your wives, even as Christ also loved the [Church](#)." [Ephesians 5:25](#) Of this bond the substance undoubtedly is this, that the man and the [woman](#) who are joined together in matrimony should remain inseparable as long as they live; and that it should be unlawful for one consort to be parted from the other, except for the [cause](#) of fornication. [Matthew 5:32](#) For this is preserved in the case of Christ and the Church; so that, as a living one with a living one, there is no [divorce](#), no separation for ever. And so

complete is the observance of this bond in the city of our [God](#), in His [holy](#) mountain—that is to say, in the Church of Christ—by all married [believers](#), who are undoubtedly members of [Christ](#), that, although [women](#) marry, and men take wives, for the purpose of procreating children, it is never permitted one to put away even an unfruitful wife for the sake of having another to bear children. And whosoever does this is held to be guilty of [adultery](#) by the law of the gospel; though not by this world's rule, which allows a [divorce](#) between the parties, without even the allegation of guilt, and the contraction of other nuptial engagements,—a concession which, the Lord tells us, even the [holy Moses](#) extended to the people of [Israel](#), because of the hardness of their hearts. [Matthew 19:8](#) The same condemnation applies to the [woman](#), if she is married to another man. So enduring, indeed, are the rights of marriage between those who have contracted them, as long as they both live, that even they are looked on as man and wife still, who have separated from one another, rather than they between whom a new connection has been formed. For by this new connection they would not be guilty of [adultery](#), if the previous matrimonial relation did not still continue. If the husband die, with whom a [true](#) marriage was made, a [true](#) marriage is now possible by a connection which would before have been [adultery](#). Thus between the conjugal pair, as long as they live, the nuptial bond has a permanent obligation, and can be cancelled neither by separation nor by union with another. But this permanence avails, in such cases, only for injury from the [sin](#), not for a bond of the covenant. In like manner the [soul](#) of an [apostate](#), which renounces as it were its marriage union with Christ, does not, even though it has cast its [faith](#) away, lose the sacrament of its [faith](#), which it received in the laver of regeneration. It would undoubtedly be given back to him if he were to return, although he lost it on his departure from Christ. He retains, however, the sacrament after his [apostasy](#), to the aggravation of his punishment, not for meriting the reward.

Chapter 12 [XI.]—Marriage Does Not Cancel a Mutual Vow of Contenance; There Was True Wedlock Between Mary and Joseph; In What Way Joseph Was the Father of Christ.

But God forbid that the nuptial bond should be regarded as broken between those who have by mutual consent agreed to observe a perpetual abstinence from the use of carnal concupiscence. Nay, it will be only a firmer one, whereby they have exchanged pledges together, which will have to be kept by a special endearment and concord,—not by the voluptuous links of bodies, but by the [voluntary](#) affections of [souls](#). For it was not deceitfully that the [angel](#) said to Joseph: "Fear not to take unto you Mary your wife." [Matthew 1:20](#) She is called his wife because of her first troth of betrothal, although he had had no carnal [knowledge](#) of her, nor was destined to have. The designation of wife was neither destroyed nor made untrue, where there never had been, nor was meant to be, any carnal connection. That virgin wife was rather a holier and more wonderful [joy](#) to her husband because of her very pregnancy without man, with disparity as to the child that was born, without disparity in the [faith](#) they cherished. And because of this conjugal fidelity they are both deservedly called "[parents](#)" [Luke 2:41](#) of Christ (not only she as His mother, but he as His father, as being her husband), both having been such in mind and purpose, though not in the flesh. But while the one was His father in purpose only, and the other His mother in the flesh also, they were both of them, for all that, only the

[parents](#) of His humility, not of His sublimity; of His weakness, not of His divinity. For the [Gospel](#) does not lie, in which one reads, "Both His father and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken about Him;" and in another passage, "Now His [parents](#) went to Jerusalem every year;" [Luke 2:41](#) and again a little afterwards, "His mother said unto Him, Son, why have You thus dealt with us? Behold, Your father and I have sought You sorrowing." [Luke 2:48](#) In order, however, that He might show them that He had a Father besides them, who begat Him without a mother, He said to them in answer: "How is it that you sought me? Wist you not that I must be about my Father's business?" [Luke 2:49](#) Furthermore, lest He should be thought to have repudiated them as His [parents](#) by what He had just said, the [evangelist](#) at once added: "And they understood not the saying which He spoke unto them; and He went down with them, and came to [Nazareth](#), and was subject unto them." [Luke 2:50-51](#) Subject to whom but His [parents](#)? And who was the subject but Jesus Christ, "who, being in the form of [God](#), thought it not [robbery](#) to be equal with God"? [Philippians 2:6](#) And wherefore subject to them, who were far beneath the form of [God](#), except that "He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant," [Philippians 2:7](#) —the form in which His [parents](#) lived? Now, since she bore Him without his engendering, they could not surely have both been His [parents](#), of that form of a servant, if they had not been conjugally united, though without carnal connection. Accordingly the genealogical series (although both [parents](#) of Christ are mentioned together in the succession) [Matthew 1:16](#) had to be extended, as it is in fact, down rather to Joseph's name, that no wrong might be done, in the case of this marriage, to the male, and indeed the stronger sex, while at the same time there was nothing detrimental to [truth](#), since Joseph, no less than Mary, was of the seed of [David](#), [Luke 1:27](#) of whom it was foretold that Christ should come.

Chapter 13.—In the Marriage of Mary and Joseph There Were All the Blessings of the Wedded State; All that is Born of Concubinage is Sinful Flesh.

The entire good, therefore, of the nuptial institution was effected in the case of these [parents](#) of Christ: there was offspring, there was faithfulness, there was the bond. As offspring, we recognise the Lord Jesus Himself; the fidelity, in that there was no [adultery](#); the bond, because there was no [divorce](#). [XII.] Only there was no nuptial cohabitation; because He who was to be without [sin](#), and was sent not in sinful flesh, but in *the likeness* of sinful flesh, [Romans 8:3](#) could not possibly have been made in sinful flesh itself without that shameful [lust](#) of the flesh which comes from [sin](#), and without which He willed to be born, in order that He might teach us, that every one who is born of sexual intercourse is in fact sinful flesh, since that alone which was not born of such intercourse was not sinful flesh. Nevertheless conjugal intercourse is not in itself [sin](#), when it is had with the intention of producing children; because the mind's good-will leads the ensuing bodily pleasure, instead of following its lead; and the human choice is not distracted by the yoke of [sin](#) pressing upon it, inasmuch as the blow of the [sin](#) is rightly brought back to the purposes of procreation. This blow has a certain prurient activity which plays the king in the foul indulgences of [adultery](#), and fornication, and lasciviousness, and uncleanness; while in the indispensable duties of the marriage state, it exhibits the docility of the slave. In the one case it is condemned as the shameless effrontery of so

violent a master; in the other, it gets modest praise as the honest service of so submissive an attendant. This [lust](#), then, is not in itself the good of the nuptial institution; but it is obscenity in sinful men, a necessity in procreant [parents](#), the fire of lascivious indulgences, the shame of nuptial pleasures. Wherefore, then, may not [persons](#) remain man and wife when they cease by mutual consent from cohabitation; seeing that [Joseph](#) and [Mary](#) continued such, though they never even began to cohabit?

Chapter 14 [XIII.]—Before Christ It Was a Time for Marrying; Since Christ It Has Been a Time for Contenance.

Now this propagation of children which among the ancient [saints](#) was a most bounden duty for the purpose of begetting and preserving a people for [God](#), amongst whom the [prophecy](#) of [Christ's](#) coming must needs have had precedence over everything, now has no longer the same necessity. For from among all nations the way is open for an abundant offspring to receive spiritual regeneration, from whatever quarter they derive their natural birth. So that we may acknowledge that the scripture which says there is "a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing," [Ecclesiastes 3:5](#) is to be distributed in its clauses to the periods before Christ and since. The former was the time to embrace, the latter to refrain from embracing.

Chapter 15.—The Teaching of the Apostle on This Subject.

Accordingly the apostle also, speaking apparently with this passage in view, declares: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they had them not; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that [rejoice](#), as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not: for the fashion of this world passes away. But I would have you without solicitude." [1 Corinthians 7:29-31](#) This entire passage (that I may express my view on this subject in the shape of a brief exposition of the apostle's words) I think must be understood as follows: "This I say, brethren, the time is short." No longer is God's people to be propagated by carnal generation; but, henceforth, it is to be gathered out by spiritual regeneration. "It remains, therefore, that they that have wives" be not subject to carnal concupiscence; "and they that weep," under the sadness of present [evil](#), should [rejoice](#) in the hope of future blessing; "and they that [rejoice](#)," over any temporary advantage, should [fear](#) the [eternal](#) judgment; "and they that buy," should so hold their possessions as not to cleave to them by overmuch [love](#); "and they that use this world" should reflect that it is passing away, and does not remain. "For the fashion of this world passes away: but," he says, "I would have you to be without solicitude,"—in other words: I would have you lift up your heart, that it may dwell among those things which do not pass away. He then goes on to say: "He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." [1 Corinthians 3:32-33](#) And thus to some extent he explains what he had already said: "Let them that have wives be as though they had none." For they who have wives in such a way as to care for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord, without having any care for the things of the world in order to please their wives, are, in fact, just as if

they had no wives. And this is effected with greater ease when the wives, too, are of such a disposition, because they please their husbands not merely because they are rich, because they are high in rank, noble in race, and amiable in natural temper, but because they are [believers](#), because they are religious, because they are chaste, because they are good men.

Chapter 16 [XIV.]—A Certain Degree of Intemperance is to Be Tolerated in the Case of Married Persons; The Use of Matrimony for the Mere Pleasure of Lust is Not Without Sin, But Because of the Nuptial Relation the Sin is Venial.

But in the married, as these things are desirable and praiseworthy, so the others are to be tolerated, that no lapse occur into damnable [sins](#); that is, into fornications and adulteries. To escape this [evil](#), even such embraces of husband and wife as have not procreation for their object, but serve an overbearing concupiscence, are permitted, so far as to be within range of forgiveness, though not prescribed by way of commandment: [1 Corinthians 7:6](#) and the married pair are enjoined not to defraud one the other, lest [Satan](#) should tempt them by reason of their incontinence. [1 Corinthians 7:5](#) For thus says the [Scripture](#): "Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one the other; except it be with consent for a time, that you may have leisure for [prayer](#); and then come together again, that [Satan](#) tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." [1 Corinthians 7:3-6](#) Now in a case where permission must be given, it cannot by any means be contended that there is not some amount of [sin](#). Since, however, the cohabitation for the purpose of procreating children, which must be admitted to be the proper end of marriage, is not sinful, what is it which the apostle allows to be permissible, but that married [persons](#), when they have not the gift of continence, may require one from the other the due of the flesh—and that not from a wish for procreation, but for the pleasure of concupiscence? This gratification incurs not the imputation of guilt on account of marriage, but receives permission on account of marriage. This, therefore, must be reckoned among the praises of matrimony; that, on its own account, it makes pardonable that which does not essentially appertain to itself. For the nuptial embrace, which subserves the demands of concupiscence, is so effected as not to impede the child-bearing, which is the end and aim of marriage.

Chapter 17 [XV.]—What is Sinless in the Use of Matrimony? What is Attended With Venial Sin, and What with Mortal?

It is, however, one thing for married [persons](#) to have intercourse only for the wish to beget children, which is not sinful: it is another thing for them to desire carnal pleasure in cohabitation, but with the spouse only, which involves venial [sin](#). For although propagation of offspring is not the motive of the intercourse, there is still no attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or [evil](#) appliance. They who resort to these, although called by the name of spouses, are really not such; they retain no vestige

of [true](#) matrimony, but pretend the [honourable](#) designation as a cloak for criminal conduct. Having also proceeded so far, they are betrayed into exposing their children, which are born against their will. They [hate](#) to nourish and retain those whom they were afraid they would beget. This infliction of cruelty on their offspring so reluctantly begotten, unmasks the [sin](#) which they had practised in darkness, and drags it clearly into the light of day. The open cruelty reproves the concealed [sin](#). Sometimes, indeed, this lustful cruelty, or, if you please, cruel [lust](#), resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born. Well, if both parties alike are so flagitious, they are not husband and wife; and if such were their character from the beginning, they have not come together by wedlock but by debauchery. But if the two are not alike in such [sin](#), I boldly declare either that the [woman](#) is, so to say, the husband's harlot; or the man the wife's adulterer.

Chapter 18 [XVI.]—Contenance Better Than Marriage; But Marriage Better Than Fornication.

Forasmuch, then, as marriage cannot be such as that of the primitive men might have been, if [sin](#) had not preceded; it may yet be like that of the [holy](#) fathers of the olden time, in such wise that the carnal concupiscence which causes shame (which did not exist in paradise previous to the fall, and after that event was not allowed to remain there), although necessarily forming a part of the body of this death, is not subservient to it, but only submits its function, when forced thereto, for the sole purpose of assisting in the procreation of children; otherwise, since the present time (as we have already said) is the period for abstaining from the nuptial embrace, and therefore makes no necessary demand on the exercise of the said function, seeing that all nations now contribute so abundantly to the production of an offspring which shall receive spiritual birth, there is the greater room for the blessing of an excellent continence. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." [Matthew 19:12](#) He, however, who cannot receive it, "even if he marry, not;" [1 Corinthians 7:28](#) and if a [woman](#) have not the gift of continence, let her also marry. [1 Corinthians 7:9](#) "It is [good](#), indeed, for a man not to touch a [woman](#)." [1 Corinthians 7:1](#) But since "all [men](#) cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given," [Matthew 19:9](#) it remains that "to avoid fornication, every man ought to have his own wife, and every [woman](#) her own husband." [1 Corinthians 7:2](#) And thus the weakness of incontinence is hindered from falling into the ruin of profligacy by the [honourable](#) estate of matrimony. Now that which the apostle says of [women](#), "I will therefore that the younger [women](#) marry," [1 Timothy 5:14](#) is also applicable to males: I will that the younger men take wives; that so it may appertain to both sexes alike "to bear children, to be" fathers and "mothers of [families](#), to give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." [1 Timothy 5:14](#)

Chapter 19 [XVII.]—Blessing of Matrimony.

In matrimony, however, let these nuptial blessings be the objects of our [love](#)—offspring, fidelity, the sacramental bond. Offspring, not that it be born only, but born again; for it is born to punishment unless it be born again to life. Fidelity, not such as even unbelievers observe one towards the other, in their ardent [love](#) of the flesh. For what husband, however impious himself, likes an adulterous wife? Or what wife, however impious she be, likes an adulterous husband? This is indeed a natural good in marriage, though a carnal one. But a member of Christ ought to be afraid of [adultery](#), not on account of himself, but of his spouse; and ought to hope to receive from Christ the reward of that fidelity which he shows to his spouse. The sacramental bond, again, which is lost neither by [divorce](#) nor by [adultery](#), should be guarded by husband and wife with concord and [chastity](#). For it alone is that which even an unfruitful marriage retains by the law of [piety](#), now that all that hope of fruitfulness is lost for the purpose of which the couple married. Let these nuptial blessings be praised in marriage by him who wishes to extol the nuptial institution. Carnal concupiscence, however, must not be ascribed to marriage: it is only to be tolerated in marriage. It is not a good which comes out of the [essence](#) of marriage, but an [evil](#) which is the accident of original [sin](#).

Chapter 20 [XVIII.]—Why Children of Wrath are Born of Holy Matrimony.

This is the reason, indeed, why of even the just and lawful marriages of the children of God are born, not children of [God](#), but children of the world; because also those who generate, if they are already regenerate, beget children not as children of [God](#), but as still children of the world. "The children of this world," says our Lord, "beget and are begotten." From the fact, therefore, that we are still children of this world, our outer man is in a state of corruption; and on this account our offspring are born as children of the present world; nor do they become sons of [God](#), except they be regenerated. Yet inasmuch as we are children of [God](#), our inner man is renewed from day to day. [2 Corinthians 4:16](#) And yet even our outer man has been sanctified through the laver of regeneration, and has received the hope of future incorruption, on which account it is [justly](#) designated as "the temple of [God](#)." "Your bodies," says the apostle, "are the temples of the [Holy Ghost](#), which is in you, and which you have of [God](#); and you are not your own, for you are bought with a great price: therefore glorify and carry God in your body." The whole of this statement is made in reference to our present sanctification, but especially in consequence of that hope of which he says in another passage, "We ourselves also, which have the [first-fruits](#) of the [Spirit](#), even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." [Romans 8:23](#) If, then, the redemption of our body is expected, as the apostle declares, it follows, that being an expectation, it is as yet a matter of hope, and not of actual possession. Accordingly the apostle adds: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [Romans 8:24-25](#) Not, therefore, by that which we are waiting for, but by that which we are now enduring, are the children of our flesh born. God forbid that a man who possesses [faith](#) should, when he hears the apostle bid men

"[love](#) their wives," [Colossians 3:19](#) [love](#) that carnal concupiscence in his wife which he ought not to [love](#) even in himself; as he may [know](#), if he listens to the words of another apostle: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man [love](#) the world, the [love](#) of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the [lust](#) of the flesh, and the [lust](#) of the eyes, and the [pride](#) of life, is not of the [Father](#), but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the [lust](#) thereof: but he that does the [will](#) of [God](#) abides for ever, even as also God abides for ever."

Chapter 21 [XIX.]—Thus Sinners are Born of Righteous Parents, Even as Wild Olives Spring from the Olive.

That, therefore, which is born of the [lust](#) of the flesh is really born of the world, and not of [God](#); but it is born of [God](#), when it is born again of water and of the Spirit. The guilt of this concupiscence, regeneration alone remits, even as natural generation contracts it. What, then, is generated must be regenerated, in order that likewise since it cannot be otherwise, what has been contracted may be remitted. It is, no [doubt](#), very wonderful that what has been remitted in the parent should still be contracted in the offspring; but nevertheless such is the case. That this [mysterious](#) verity, which unbelievers neither see nor [believe](#), might get some palpable evidence in its support, God in His [providence](#) has secured in the example of certain trees. For why should we not suppose that for this very purpose the wild olive springs from the olive? Is it not indeed credible that, in a thing which has been created for the use of [mankind](#), the Creator provided and appointed what should afford an instructive example, applicable to the [human race](#)? It is a wonderful thing, then, how those who have been themselves delivered by [grace](#) from the bondage of [sin](#), should still beget those who are tied and bound by the self-same chain, and who require the same process of loosening? Yes; and we admit the wonderful fact. But that the embryo of wild olive trees should latently exist in the germs of [true](#) olives, who would deem credible, if it were not [proved true](#) by experiment and observation? In the same manner, therefore, as a wild olive grows out of the seed of the wild olive, and from the seed of the [true](#) olive springs also nothing but a wild olive, notwithstanding the very great difference there is between the wild olive and the olive; so what is born in the flesh, either of a sinner or of a just man, is in both instances a sinner, notwithstanding the vast distinction which exists between the sinner and the righteous man. He that is begotten is no sinner as yet in act, and is still new from his birth; but in guilt he is old. Human from the Creator, he is a captive of the destroyer, and needs a redeemer. The difficulty, however, is how a state of captivity can possibly befall the offspring, when the [parents](#) have been themselves previously redeemed from it. Now it is no easy matter to unravel this intricate point, or to explain it in a set discourse; therefore unbelievers refuse to accept it as [true](#); just as if in that other point about the wild olive and the olive, which we gave in illustration, any reason could be easily found, or explanation clearly given, why the self-same shoot should sprout out of so dissimilar a stock. The [truth](#), however, of this can be discovered by any one who is willing to make the experiment. Let it then serve for a good example for suggesting belief of what admits not of ocular demonstration.

Chapter 22 [XX.]—Even Infants, When Unbaptized, are in the Power of the Devil; Exorcism in the Case of Infants, and Renunciation of the Devil.

Now the [Christian faith](#) unflinchingly declares, what our new [heretics](#) have begun to deny, both that they who are cleansed in the laver of regeneration are redeemed from the power of the [devil](#), and that those who have not yet been redeemed by such regeneration are still captive in the power of the [devil](#), even if they be infant children of the redeemed, unless they be themselves redeemed by the self-same [grace](#) of [Christ](#). For we cannot [doubt](#) that that blessing of God applies to every stage of human life, which the apostle describes when he says concerning Him: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." [Colossians 1:13](#) From this power of darkness, therefore, of which the [devil](#) is the prince,—in other words, from the power of the [devil](#) and his [angels](#),—infants are delivered when they are [baptized](#); and whosoever denies this, is convicted by the [truth](#) of the Church's very [sacraments](#), which no [heretical](#) novelty in the Church of Christ is permitted to destroy or change, so long as the Divine Head rules and helps the entire body which He owns—small as well as great. It is [true](#), then, and in no way false, that the [devil's](#) power is exorcised in infants, and that they renounce him by the hearts and mouths of those who bring them to [baptism](#), being unable to do so by their own; in order that they may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of their Lord. What is that, therefore, within them which keeps them in the power of the [devil](#) until they are delivered from it by Christ's sacrament of [baptism](#)? What is it, I ask, but [sin](#)? Nothing else, indeed, has the [devil](#) found which enables him to put under his own control that nature of man which the good Creator made good. But infants have committed no [sin](#) of their own since they have been alive. Only original [sin](#), therefore, remains, whereby they are made captive under the [devil's](#) power, until they are redeemed therefrom by the laver of regeneration and the blood of [Christ](#), and pass into their Redeemer's kingdom,—the power of their enthraller being frustrated, and power being given them to become "sons of God" instead of children of this world. [John 1:12](#)

Chapter 23 [XXI.]—Sin Has Not Arisen Out of the Goodness of Marriage; The Sacrament of Matrimony a Great One in the Case of Christ and the Church—A Very Small One in the Case of a Man and His Wife.

If now we interrogate, so to speak, those goods of marriage to which we have often referred, and inquire how it is that [sin](#) could possibly have been propagated from them to infants, we shall get this answer from the first of them—the work of procreation of offspring: "My [happiness](#) would in paradise have been greater if [sin](#) had not been committed. For to me belongs that blessing of almighty God: 'Be fruitful, and multiply.' [Genesis 1:29](#) For accomplishing this good work, various members were created suited to each sex; these members were, of course, in [existence](#) before [sin](#), but they were not objects of shame." This will be the answer of the second good—the fidelity of [chastity](#): "If [sin](#) had not been committed, what in paradise could have been more secure than

myself, when there was no [lust](#) of my own to spur me, none of another to tempt me?" And then this will be the answer of the sacramental bond of marriage,—the third good: "Of me was that word spoken in paradise before the entrance of [sin](#): 'A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they two shall become one flesh.'" [Genesis 2:24](#) This the apostle applies to the case of Christ and of the [Church](#), and calls it then "a great sacrament." What, then, in Christ and in the [Church](#) is great, in the instances of each married pair it is but very small, but even then it is the sacrament of an inseparable union. What now is there in these three blessings of marriage out of which the bond of [sin](#) could pass over to posterity? Absolutely nothing. And in these blessings it is certain that the goodness of matrimony is entirely comprised; and even now good wedlock consists of these same blessings.

Chapter 24.—Lust and Shame Come from Sin; The Law of Sin; The Shamelessness of the Cynics.

But if, in like manner, the question be asked of the concupiscence of the flesh, how it is that acts now bring shame which once were free from shame, will not her answer be, that she only began to have [existence](#) in men's members after [sin](#)? [XXII.] And, therefore, that the apostle designated her influence as "the law of [sin](#)," [Romans 7:23](#) inasmuch as she subjugated man to herself when he was unwilling to remain subject to his [God](#); and that it was she who made the first married pair ashamed at that moment when they covered their loins; even as all are still ashamed, and seek out secret retreats for cohabitation, and dare not have even the children, whom they have themselves thus begotten, to be witnesses of what they do. It was against this modesty of natural shame that the Cynic [philosophers](#), in the [error](#) of their astonishing shamelessness, struggled so hard: they thought that the intercourse indeed of husband and wife, since it was lawful and [honourable](#), should therefore be done in public. Such barefaced obscenity deserved to receive the name of dogs; and so they went by the title of "[Cynics](#)."

Chapter 25 [XXIII.]—Concupiscence in the Regenerate Without Consent is Not Sin; In What Sense Concupiscence is Called Sin.

Now this concupiscence, this law of [sin](#) which dwells in our members, to which the law of righteousness forbids allegiance, saying in the words of the apostle, "Let not [sin](#), therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should [obey](#) it in the [lusts](#) thereof; neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto [sin](#):" [Romans 6:12-13](#) —this concupiscence, I say, which is cleansed only by the sacrament of regeneration, does undoubtedly, by means of natural birth, pass on the bond of [sin](#) to a man's posterity, unless they are themselves loosed from it by regeneration. In the case, however, of the regenerate, concupiscence is not itself [sin](#) any longer, whenever they do not consent to it for illicit works, and when the members are not applied by the presiding mind to perpetrate such deeds. So that, if what is enjoined in one passage, "You shall not [covet](#)," is not kept, that at any rate is observed which is commanded in another place, "You shall not go after your concupiscences." [Sirach 18:30](#) Inasmuch, however, as by a certain manner of speech it is called [sin](#), since it arose from [sin](#), and, when it has the upper hand, produces [sin](#), the guilt of it prevails in the natural man; but this guilt, by Christ's [grace](#)

through the remission of all [sins](#), is not suffered to prevail in the regenerate man, if he does not yield [obedience](#) to it whenever it urges him to the commission of [evil](#). As arising from [sin](#), it is, I say, called [sin](#), although in the regenerate it is not actually [sin](#); and it has this designation applied to it, just as speech which the tongue produces is itself called "*tongue*;" and just as the word "*hand*" is used in the sense of writing, which the hand produces. In the same way concupiscence is called [sin](#), as producing [sin](#) when it conquers the will: so to cold and frost the epithet "*sluggish*" is given; not as arising from, but as productive of, sluggishness; benumbing us, in fact.

Chapter 26.—Whatever is Born Through Concupiscence is Not Undeservedly in Subjection to the Devil by Reason of Sin; The Devil Deserves Heavier Punishment Than Men.

This wound which the [devil](#) has inflicted on the [human race](#) compels everything which has its birth in consequence of it to be under the [devil's](#) power, as if he were rightly plucking fruit off his own tree. Not as if man's nature, which is only of [God](#), came from him, but [sin](#) alone, which is not of [God](#). For it is not on its own account that man's nature is under condemnation, because it is the work of [God](#), and therefore laudable; but on account of that condemnable corruption by which it has been vitiated. Now it is by reason of this condemnation that it is in subjection to the [devil](#), who is also in the same damnable state. For the [devil](#) is himself an unclean spirit: good, indeed, so far as he is a spirit, but [evil](#) as being unclean; for by nature he is a spirit, by the corruption thereof an unclean one. Of these two, the one is of [God](#), the other of himself. His hold over men, therefore, whether of an advanced age or in infancy, is not because they are human, but because they are polluted. He, then, who feels surprise that God's creature is a subject of the [devil](#), should cease from such feeling. For one creature of God is in subjection to another creature of [God](#), the less to the greater, a human being to an angelic one; and this is not owing to nature, but to a corruption of nature: polluted is the sovereign, polluted also the subject. All this is the fruit of that ancient stock of pollution which he has planted in man; himself being destined to suffer a heavier punishment at the last judgment, as being the more polluted; but at the same time even they who will have to bear a less heavy burden in that condemnation are subjects of him as the prince and author of [sin](#), for there will be no other [cause](#) of condemnation than [sin](#).

Chapter 27 [XXIV.]—Through Lust Original Sin is Transmitted; Venial Sins in Married Persons; Concupiscence of the Flesh, the Daughter and Mother of Sin.

Wherefore the [devil](#) holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good by which marriage is [good](#), but of the [evil](#) of concupiscence, which, indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion to feel shame. Marriage is itself "[honourable](#) in all" [Hebrews 13:4](#) the goods which properly appertain to it; but even when it has its "bed undefiled" (not only by fornication and [adultery](#), which are damnable disgraces, but also by any of those excesses of cohabitation such as do not arise from any prevailing desire of children, but from an overbearing [lust](#) of pleasure, which are venial [sins](#) in man and

wife), yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and [honourable](#) cannot be effected without the ardour of [lust](#), so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to the use of reason and not of [lust](#). Now, this ardour, whether following or preceding the will, does somehow, by a power of its own, move the members which cannot be moved simply by the will, and in this manner it shows itself not to be the servant of a will which commands it, but rather to be the punishment of a will which disobeys it. It shows, moreover, that it must be excited, not by a free choice, but by a certain seductive stimulus, and that on this very account it produces shame. This is the carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer accounted [sin](#) in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature except from [sin](#). It is the daughter of [sin](#), as it were; and whenever it yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the mother of many [sins](#). Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original [sin](#), unless, indeed, it be born again in Him whom the Virgin conceived without this concupiscence. Wherefore, when He vouchsafed to be born in the flesh, He alone was born without [sin](#).

Chapter 28 [XXV.]—Concupiscence Remains After Baptism, Just as Languor Does After Recovery from Disease; Concupiscence is Diminished in Persons of Advancing Years, and Increased in the Incontinent.

If the question arises, how this concupiscence of the flesh remains in the regenerate, in whose case has been effected a remission of all [sins](#) whatever; seeing that human semination takes place by its means, even when the carnal offspring of even a [baptized](#) parent is born: or, at all events, if it may be in the case of a [baptized](#) parent concupiscence and not be [sin](#), why should this same concupiscence be [sin](#) in the offspring?—the answer to be given is this: Carnal concupiscence is remitted, indeed, in [baptism](#); not so that it is put out of [existence](#), but so that it is not to be imputed for [sin](#). Although its guilt is now taken away, it still remains until our entire infirmity be healed by the advancing renewal of our inner man, day by day, when at last our outward man shall be clothed with incorruption. [1 Corinthians 15:53](#) It does not remain, however, substantially, as a body, or a spirit; but it is nothing more than a certain affection of an [evil](#) quality, such as languor, for instance. There is not, to be sure, anything remaining which may be remitted whenever, as the [Scripture](#) says, "the Lord forgives all our iniquities." But until that happens which immediately follows in the same passage, "Who heals all thine infirmities, who redeems your life from corruption," there remains this concupiscence of the flesh in the body of this death. Now we are admonished not to [obey](#) its sinful desires to do [evil](#): "Let not [sin](#) reign in your mortal body." [Romans 6:12](#) Still this concupiscence is daily lessened in [persons](#) of continence and increasing years, and most of all when old age makes a near approach. The man, however, who yields to it a [wicked](#) service, receives such great energies that, even when all his members are now failing through age, and those special parts of his body are unable to be applied to their proper function, he does not ever cease to revel in a still increasing rage of disgraceful and shameless desire.

Chapter 29 [XXVI.]—How Concupiscence Remains in the Baptized in Act, When It Has Passed Away as to Its Guilt.

In the case, then, of those [persons](#) who are born again in [Christ](#), when they receive an entire remission of all their [sins](#), it is of course necessary that the guilt also of the still indwelling concupiscence should be remitted, in order that (as I said) it should not be imputed to them for [sin](#). For even as in the case of those [sins](#) which cannot be themselves permanent, since they pass away as soon as they are committed, the guilt yet is permanent, and (if not remitted) will remain for evermore; so, when the concupiscence is remitted, the guilt of it also is taken away. For not to have [sin](#) means this, not to be deemed guilty of [sin](#). If a man have (for example) committed [adultery](#), though he do not repeat the [sin](#), he is held to be guilty of [adultery](#) until the indulgence in guilt be itself remitted. He has the [sin](#), therefore, remaining, although the particular act of his [sin](#) no longer exists, since it has passed away along with the time when it was committed. For if to desist from sinning were the same thing as not to have [sins](#), it would be sufficient if Scripture were content to give us the simple warning, "My son, have you [sinned](#)? Do so no more." [Sirach 21:1](#) This, however, does not suffice, for it goes on to say, "Ask forgiveness for your former [sins](#)." [Sirach 21:1](#) Sins remain, therefore, if they are not forgiven. But how do they remain if they are passed away? Only thus, they have passed away in their *act*, but they are permanent in their *guilt*. Contrariwise, then, may it happen that a thing may remain in act, but pass away in guilt.

Chapter 30 [XXVII.]—The Evil Desires of Concupiscence; We Ought to Wish that They May Not Be.

For the concupiscence of the flesh is in some sort active, even when it does not exhibit either an assent of the heart, where its seat of empire is, or those members whereby, as its weapons, it fulfils what it is bent on. But what in this action does it effect, unless it be its [evil](#) and shameful desires? For if these were good and lawful, the apostle would not forbid [obedience](#) to them, saying, "Let not [sin](#) therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should [obey](#) the [lusts](#) thereof." [Romans 6:12](#) He does not say, that you should have the [lusts](#) thereof, but "that you should [obey](#) the [lusts](#) thereof;" in order that (as these desires are greater or less in different individuals, according as each shall have progressed in the renewal of the inner man) we may maintain the fight of [holiness](#) and [chastity](#), for the purpose of withholding [obedience](#) to these [lusts](#). Nevertheless, our wish ought to be nothing less than the nonexistence of these very desires, even if the accomplishment of such a wish be not possible in the body of this death. This is the reason why the same apostle, in another passage, addressing us as if in his own person, gives us this instruction: "For what I would," says he, "that do I not; but what I [hate](#), that do I." [Romans 7:15](#) In a word, "I [covet](#)." For he was unwilling to do this, that he might be perfect on every side. "If, then, I do that which I would not," he goes on to say, "I consent unto the law that it is [good](#)." [Romans 7:16](#) Because the law, too, wills not that which I also would not. For it wills not that I should have concupiscence, for it says, "You shall not [covet](#);" and I am no less unwilling to cherish so [evil](#) a desire. In this, therefore, there is complete accord between the [will](#) of the law and my own will. But because he was unwilling to [covet](#), and yet did [covet](#), and for all that did not by any means [obey](#) this

concupiscence so as to yield assent to it, he immediately adds these words: "Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but [sin](#) that dwells in me." [Romans 7:17](#)

Chapter 31 [XXVIII.]—Who is the Man that Can Say, "It is No More I that Do It"?

A man, however, is much deceived if, while consenting to the [lust](#) of his flesh, and then both resolving in his mind to do its desires and setting about it, he supposes that he has still a right to say, "It is not I that do it," even if he [hates](#) and loathes himself for assenting to [evil](#) desires. The two things are simultaneous in his case: he [hates](#) the thing himself because he [knows](#) that it is [evil](#); and yet he does it, because he is bent on doing it. Now if, in addition to all this, he proceeds to do what the [Scripture](#) forbids him, when it says, "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto [sin](#)," [Romans 6:13](#) and completes with a bodily act what he was bent on doing in his mind; and says, "It is not I that do the thing, but [sin](#) that dwells in me," [Romans 7:17](#) because he feels displeased with himself for resolving on and accomplishing the deed,—he so greatly [errs](#) as not to [know](#) his own self. For, whereas he is altogether himself, his mind determining and his body executing his own purpose, he yet supposes that he is himself no longer! [XXIX.] That man, therefore, alone speaks the [truth](#) when he says, "It is no more I that do it, but [sin](#) that dwells in me," who only feels the concupiscence, and neither resolves on doing it with the consent of his heart, nor accomplishes it with the ministry of his body.

Chapter 32.—When Good Will Be Perfectly Done.

The apostle then adds these words: "For I [know](#) that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perfect that which is [good](#) I find not." [Romans 7:18](#) Now this is said, because a good thing is not then perfected, when there is an absence of [evil](#) desires, as [evil](#) is perfected when [evil](#) desires are [obeyed](#). But when they are present, but are not [obeyed](#), neither [evil](#) is performed, since [obedience](#) is not yielded to them; nor good, because of their inoperative presence. There is rather an intermediate condition of things: good is effected in some degree, because the [evil](#) concupiscence has gained no assent to itself; and in some degree there is a remnant of [evil](#), because the concupiscence is present. This accounts for the apostle's precise words. He does not say, To *do* good is not present to him, but "how to perfect it." For the [truth](#) is, one *does* a good deal of good when he does what the [Scripture](#) enjoins, "Go not after your [lusts](#);" [Sirach 18:30](#) yet he falls short of perfection, in that he fails to keep the great commandment, "You shall not [covet](#)." [Exodus 20:7](#) The law said, "You shall not [covet](#)," in order that, when we find ourselves lying in this diseased state, we might seek the medicine of Grace, and by that commandment [know](#) both in what direction our endeavours should aim as we advance in our present mortal condition, and to what a height it is possible to reach in the future [immortality](#). For unless perfection could somewhere be attained, this commandment would never have been given to us.

Chapter 33 [XXX.]—True Freedom Comes with Willing Delight in God's Law.

The apostle then repeats his former statement, the more fully to recommend its purport: "For the good," says he, "that I would, I do not: but the [evil](#) which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but [sin](#) that dwells in me." Then follows this: "I find then the law, when I would act, to be good to me; for [evil](#) is present with me." In other words, I find that the law is a good to me, when I wish to do what the law would have me do; inasmuch as it is not with the law itself (which says, "You shall not [covet](#)") that [evil](#) is present; no, it is with myself that the [evil](#) is present, which I would not do, because I have the concupiscence even in my willingness. "For," he adds, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my [mind](#), and bringing me into captivity to the law of [sin](#) which is in my members." [Romans 7:22-23](#) This delight with the law of God after the inward man, comes to us from the mighty [grace](#) of [God](#); for thereby is our inward man renewed day by day, [2 Corinthians 4:16](#) because it is thereby that progress is made by us with perseverance. In it there is not the [fear](#) that has torment, but the [love](#) that cheers and gratifies. We are [truly](#) free there, where we have no unwilling [joy](#).

Chapter 34.—How Concupiscence Made a Captive of the Apostle; What the Law of Sin Was to the Apostle.

Then, indeed, this statement, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my [mind](#)," refers to that very concupiscence which we are now speaking of—the law of [sin](#) in our sinful flesh. But when he said, "And bringing me into captivity to the law of [sin](#)," that is, to its own self, "which is in my members," he either meant "bringing me into captivity," in the sense of *endeavouring to make me captive*, that is, urging me to approve and accomplish [evil](#) desire; or rather (and this opens no controversy), in the sense of leading me captive according to the flesh, and, if this is not possessed by the carnal concupiscence which he calls the law of [sin](#), no unlawful desire—such as our mind ought not to [obey](#)—would, of course, be there to excite and disturb. The fact, however, that the apostle does not say, Bringing *my flesh* into captivity, but "Bringing *me* into captivity," leads us to look out for some other meaning for the phrase, and to understand the term "bringing me into captivity" as if he had said, *endeavouring to make me captive*. But why, after all, might he not say, "Bringing me into captivity," and at the same time mean us to understand his flesh? Was it not spoken by one concerning Jesus, when His flesh was not found in the sepulchre: "They have taken away my Lord, and I [know](#) not where they have laid Him"? [John 20:2](#) Was Mary's then an improper question, because she said, "My Lord," and not "My Lord's body" or "flesh"?

Chapter 35 [XXXI.]—The Flesh, Carnal Affection.

But we have in the apostle's own language, a little before, a sufficiently clear [proof](#) that he might have meant his flesh when he said, "Bringing *me* into captivity." For after declaring, "I [know](#) that *in me* dwells no good thing," he at once added an explanatory sentence to this effect, "That is, *in my flesh*." [Romans 7:18](#) It is then the flesh, in which

there dwells nothing good, that is brought into captivity to the law of [sin](#). Now he designates that as the flesh wherein lies a certain morbid carnal affection, not the mere conformation of our bodily fabric whose members are not to be used as weapons for [sin](#)—that is, for that very concupiscence which holds this flesh of ours captive. So far, indeed, as concerns this actual bodily substance and nature of ours, it is already God's temple in all faithful men, whether living in marriage or in continence. If, however, absolutely nothing of our flesh were in captivity, not even to the [devil](#), because there has accrued to it the remission of [sin](#), that [sin](#) be not imputed to it (and this is properly designated the law of [sin](#)); yet if under this law of [sin](#), that is, under its own concupiscence, our flesh were not to some degree held captive, how could that be [true](#) which the apostle states, when he speaks of our "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"? [Romans 8:23](#) In so far, then, as there is now this waiting for the redemption of our body, there is also in some degree still existing something in us which is a captive to the law of [sin](#). Accordingly he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The [grace](#) of [God](#), through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 7:24](#) What are we to understand by such language, but that our body, which is undergoing corruption, weighs heavily on our [soul](#)? When, therefore, this very body of ours shall be restored to us in an incorrupt state, there shall be a full liberation from the body of this death; but there will be no such deliverance for them who shall rise again to condemnation. To the body of this death then is understood to be owing the circumstance that there is in our members another law which [wars](#) against the law of the [mind](#), so long as the flesh [lusts](#) against the spirit—without, however, subjugating the [mind](#), inasmuch as on its side, too, the spirit has a concupiscence contrary to the flesh. [Galatians 5:17](#) Thus, although the actual law of [sin](#) partly holds the flesh in captivity (whence comes its resistance to the law of the mind), still it has not an absolute empire in our body, notwithstanding its mortal state, since it refuses [obedience](#) to its desires. [Romans 6:12](#) For in the case of hostile armies between whom there is an earnest conflict, even the side which is inferior in the fight usually holds a something which it has captured; and although in some such way there is somewhat in our flesh which is kept under the law of [sin](#), yet it has before it the hope of redemption: and then there will remain not a particle of this corrupt concupiscence; but our flesh, healed of that diseased plague, and wholly clad in [immortality](#), shall live for evermore in [eternal](#) blessedness.

Chapter 36.—Even Now While We Still Have Concupiscence We May Be Safe in Christ.

But the apostle pursues the subject, and says, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of [God](#), but with the flesh the law of [sin](#);" [Romans 7:25](#) which must be thus understood: "With my mind I serve the law of [God](#)," by refusing my consent to the law of [sin](#); "with my flesh, however," I serve "the law of [sin](#)," by having the desires of [sin](#), from which I am not yet entirely freed, although I yield them no assent. Then let us observe carefully what he has said after all the above: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in [Christ Jesus](#)." [Romans 8:1](#) Even *now*, says he, when the law in my members keeps up its warfare against the law of my [mind](#), and retains in captivity somewhat in the body of this death, there is no condemnation to them which are in [Christ Jesus](#). And listen why: "For the law of the spirit of life in [Christ Jesus](#)," says he, "has

made me free from the law of [sin](#) and death." [Romans 8:2](#) How made me free, except by abolishing its sentence of guilt by the remission of all my [sins](#); so that, though it still remains, only daily lessening more and more, it is nevertheless not imputed to me as [sin](#)?

Chapter 37 [XXXII.]—The Law of Sin with Its Guilt in Unbaptized Infants. By Adam's Sin the Human Race Has Become a "Wild Olive Tree."

Until, then, this remission of [sins](#) takes place in the offspring, they have within them the law of [sin](#) in such manner, that it is really imputed to them as [sin](#); in other words, with that law there is attaching to them its sentence of guilt, which holds them debtors to [eternal](#) condemnation. For what a parent transmits to his carnal offspring is the condition of his own carnal birth, not that of his spiritual new birth. For, that he was born in the flesh, although no hindrance after the remission of his guilt to his fruit, still remains hidden, as it were, in the seed of the olive, even though, because of the remission of his [sins](#), it in no respect injures the oil—that is, in plain language, his life which he lives, "righteous by [faith](#)," [Romans 1:17](#) after Christ, whose very name comes from the oil, that is, from the anointing. That, however, which in the case of a regenerate parent, as in the seed of the pure olive, is covered without any guilt, which has been remitted, is still no [doubt](#) retained in the case of his offspring, which is yet unregenerate, as in the wild olive, with all its guilt, until here also it be remitted by the self-same [grace](#). When Adam [sinned](#), he was changed from that pure olive, which had no such corrupt seed whence should spring the bitter issue of the wild olive, into a wild olive tree; and, inasmuch as his [sin](#) was so great, that by it his nature became commensurately changed for the worse, he converted the entire race of man into a wild olive stock. The effect of this change we see illustrated, as has been said above, in the instance of these very trees. Whenever God's [grace](#) converts a sapling into a good olive, so that the fault of the first birth (that original [sin](#) which had been derived and contracted from the concupiscence of the flesh) is remitted, covered, and not imputed, there is still inherent in it that nature from which is born a wild olive, unless it, too, by the same [grace](#), is by the second birth changed into a good olive.

Chapter 38 [XXXIII.]—To Baptism Must Be Referred All Remission of Sins, and the Complete Healing of the Resurrection. Daily Cleansing.

Blessed, therefore, is the olive tree "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose [sins](#) are covered;" blessed is it "to which the Lord has not imputed [sin](#)." But this, which has received the remission, the covering, and the acquittal, even up to the complete change into an [eternal immortality](#), still retains a secret force which furnishes seed for a wild and bitter olive tree, unless the same tillage of God prunes it also, by remission, covering, and acquittal. There will, however, be left no corruption at all in even carnal seed, when the same regeneration, which is now effected through the sacred laver, purges and heals all man's [evil](#) to the very end. By its means the very same flesh, through which the carnal mind was formed, shall become spiritual,—no longer having that carnal [lust](#) which resists

the law of the [mind](#), no longer emitting carnal seed. For in this sense must be understood that which the apostle whom we have so often quoted says elsewhere: "Christ loved the [Church](#), and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a [glorious](#) Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." [Ephesians 5:25](#) It must, I say, be understood as implying, that by this laver of regeneration and word of sanctification all the [evils](#) of regenerate men of whatever kind are cleansed and healed,—not the [sins](#) only which are all now remitted in [baptism](#), but those also which after [baptism](#) are committed by human [ignorance](#) and frailty; not, indeed, that [baptism](#) is to be repeated as often as [sin](#) is repeated, but that by its one only ministrations it comes to pass that pardon is secured to the faithful of all their [sins](#) both before and after their regeneration. For of what use would repentance be, either before [baptism](#), if [baptism](#) did not follow; or after it, if it did not precede? Nay, in the Lord's Prayer itself, which is our daily cleansing, of what avail or advantage would it be for that petition to be uttered, "Forgive us our debts," [Matthew 6:12](#) unless it be by such as have been [baptized](#)? And in like manner, how great soever be the liberality and kindness of a man's [alms](#), what, I ask, would they profit him towards the remission of his [sins](#) if he had not been [baptized](#)? In short, on whom but on the [baptized](#) shall be bestowed the very felicities of the [kingdom of heaven](#); where the Church shall have no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; where there shall be nothing blameworthy, nothing unreal; where there shall be not only no guilt for [sin](#), but no concupiscence to excite it?

Chapter 39 [XXXIV.]—By the Holiness of Baptism, Not Sins Only, But All Evils Whatsoever, Have to Be Removed. The Church is Not Yet Free from All Stain.

And thus not only all the [sins](#), but all the ills of men of what kind soever, are in course of removal by the [holiness](#) of that [Christian](#) laver whereby Christ cleanses His Church, that He may present it to Himself, not in this world, but in that which is to come, as not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now there are some who maintain that such is the Church even now, and yet they are in it. Well then, since they confess that they have some [sins](#) themselves, if they say the [truth](#) in this (and, of course, they do, as they are not free from [sins](#)), then the Church has "a spot" in them; while if they tell an untruth in their confession (as speaking from a double heart), then the Church has in them "a wrinkle." If, however, they assert that it is themselves, and not the [Church](#), which has all this, they then as good as acknowledge that they are not its members, nor belong to its body, so that they are even condemned by their own confession.

Chapter 40 [XXXV.]—Refutation of the Pelagians by the Authority of St. Ambrose, Whom They Quote to Show that the Desire of the Flesh is a Natural Good.

In respect, however, to this concupiscence of the flesh, we have striven in this lengthy discussion to distinguish it accurately from the goods of marriage. This we have done on account of our modern [heretics](#), who cavil whenever concupiscence is censured, as if it

involved a censure of marriage. Their object is to praise concupiscence as a natural good, that so they may defend their own baneful dogma, which asserts that those who are born by its means do not contract original [sin](#). Now the blessed Ambrose, [bishop](#) of Milan, by whose [priestly](#) office I received the washing of regeneration, briefly spoke on this matter, when, expounding the [prophet](#) Isaiah, he gathered from him the nativity of Christ in the flesh: "Thus," says the [bishop](#), "He was both tempted in all points as a [man](#), [Hebrews 4:15](#) and in the likeness of man He bare all things; but inasmuch as He was born of the [Spirit](#), He kept Himself from [sin](#). For every man is a liar; and there is none without [sin](#) but God alone. It has, therefore, been ever firmly maintained, that it is clear that no man from husband and wife, that is to say, by means of that conjunction of their [persons](#), is free from [sin](#). He who is free from [sin](#) is also free from conception of this kind." Well now, what is it which St. Ambrose has here condemned in the [true](#) doctrine of this deliverance?—is it the goodness of marriage, or not rather the worthless opinion of these [heretics](#), although they had not then come upon the stage? I have thought it worth while to adduce this testimony, because Pelagius mentions Ambrose with such commendation as to say: "The blessed Bishop Ambrose, in whose writings more than anywhere else the Roman [faith](#) is clearly stated, has flourished like a beautiful flower among the Latin writers. His fidelity and extremely pure perception of the sense of Scripture no opponent even has ever ventured to impugn." I hope he may regret having entertained opinions opposed to Ambrose, but not that he has bestowed this praise on that [holy](#) man.

Here, then, you have my book, which, owing to its tedious length and difficult subject, it has been as troublesome for me to compose as for you to read, in those little snatches of time in which you have been able (or at least, as I suppose, have been able) to find yourself at leisure. Although it has been indeed drawn up with considerable labour amidst my ecclesiastical duties, as God has vouchsafed to give me His help, I should hardly have intruded it on your notice, with all your public cares, if I had not been informed by a godly man, who has an intimate [knowledge](#) of you, that you take such pleasure in reading as to lie awake by the hour, night after night, spending the precious time in your favourite pursuit.

On Marriage and Concupiscence (Book II)

Preliminary notes

(1) From the Preface of Augustin's "Unfinished Work Against Julianus."

I Wrote a treatise, under the title *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, and addressed it to the Count Valerius, on learning that he had been informed of the [Pelagians](#) that they

charge us with condemning marriage. Now in that treatise I showed the distinction, as critically and accurately as I was able, between the good of marriage and the [evil](#) of carnal concupiscence,—an [evil](#) which is well used by conjugal [chastity](#). On receiving my treatise, the illustrious man whom I have named sent me in a short paper a few sentences culled from a work of Julianus, a Pelagian [heretic](#). In this work he has thought fit to extend to four books his answer to the before-mentioned treatise of mine, which is limited to one book only, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*. I do not [know](#) to whom we were indebted for the said extracts: he confined his selection, evidently on purpose, to the first book of Julianus' work. At the request of Valerius, I lost no time in drawing up my answer to the extracts. And thus it happened that I have written a second book also under the same title; and in reply to this Julianus has drawn up to eight books, in excess of his loquacious powers.

(2) From Augustin's Epistle to Claudius [CCVII].

"Whoever has perused this second book of mine, addressed (as the first was) to the Count Valerius, and drawn up (as, indeed, both were) for his use, will have discovered that there are some points in which I have not answered Julianus, but that I meant my work rather for him who made the extracts from that writer's books, and who did not arrange them in the order in which he found them. He deemed some considerable alteration necessary in his arrangement, very probably with the view of appropriating by this method as his own the thoughts which evidently were another person's."

The book itself

Augustin, in this latter book, refutes sundry sentences which had been culled by some unknown author from the first of four books that Julianus had published in opposition to the former book of his treatise "On Marriage and Concupiscence;" which sentences had been forwarded to him at the instance of the Count Valerius. He vindicates the [Catholic](#) doctrine of original [sin](#) from his opponent's cavils and subtleties, and particularly shows how diverse it is from the [infamous heresy](#) of the Manicheans.

Chapter 1 [I.]—Introductory Statement.

I Cannot tell you, dearly loved and honoured son Valerius, how great is the pleasure which my heart receives when I hear of your warm and earnest interest in the testimony of the word of God against the [heretics](#); and this, too, amidst your military duties and the cares which devolve on you in the eminent position you so [justly](#) occupy, and the pressing functions, moreover, of your political life. After reading the letter of your Eminence, in which you acknowledge the book which I dedicated to you, I was roused to write this also; for you request me to attend to the statement, which my brother and fellow-[bishop](#) Alypius is commissioned to make to me, about the discussion which is being raised by the [heretics](#) over sundry passages of my book. Not only have I received this information from the narrative of my said brother, but I have also read the extracts which he produced, and which you had yourself forwarded to [Rome](#), after his departure from Ravenna. On discovering the boastful language of our adversaries, as I could easily

do in these extracts, I determined, with the help of the Lord, to reply to their taunts with all the [truthfulness](#) and scriptural authority that I could command.

Chapter 2 [II.]—In This and the Four Next Chapters He Adduces the Garbled Extracts He Has to Consider.

The paper which I now answer starts with this title: "*Headings out of a book written by Augustin, in reply to which I have culled a few passages out of books.*" I perceive from this that the person who forwarded these written papers to your Excellency wanted to make his extracts out of the books he does not name, with a view, so far as I can judge, to getting a quicker answer, in order that he might not delay your urgency. Now, after considering what books they were which he meant, I suppose that it must have been those which Julianus mentioned in the Epistle he sent to [Rome](#), a copy of which found its way to me at the same time. For he there says: "They go so far as to allege that marriage, now in dispute, was not instituted by [God](#),—a declaration which may be read in a work of Augustin's, to which I have lately replied in a treatise of four books." These are the books, as I [believe](#), from which the extracts were taken. It would, then, have been perhaps the better course if I had set myself deliberately to disprove and refute that entire work of his, which he spread out into four volumes. But I was most unwilling to delay my answer, even as you yourself lost no time in forwarding to me the written statements which I was requested to reply to.

Chapter 3.—The Same Continued.

The words which he has quoted and endeavoured to refute out of my book, which I sent to you, and with which you are very well acquainted, are the following: "They are constantly affirming, in their excessive [hatred](#) of us, that we condemn marriage and that divine procedure by which God creates human beings by means of [men](#) and [women](#), inasmuch as we maintain that they who are born of such a union contract original [sin](#), and do not deny that, of whatever [parents](#) they are born, they are still under the [devil's](#) dominion unless they be born again in Christ." Now, in quoting these words of mine, he took care to omit the testimony of the apostle, which I adduced by the weighty significance of which he felt himself too hard pressed. For, after saying that men at their birth contract original [sin](#), I at once introduced the apostle's words: "By one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all [men sinned](#)." [Romans 5:12](#) Well, as I have already mentioned, he omitted this passage of the apostle, and then closed up the other remarks of mine which have been now quoted. For he [knew](#) too well how acceptable to the hearts and consciences of all faithful catholics are these words of the apostle, which I had adopted, but which he omitted,— words which are so direct and so clear, that these new-fangled [heretics](#) use every effort in their dark and tortuous glosses to obscure and deprave their force.

Chapter 4.—The Same Continued.

But he has added other words of mine, where I have said: "Nor do they reflect that the good of marriage is no more impeachable by reason of the original [evil](#) which is derived

therefrom, than the [evil](#) of [adultery](#) and fornication can be excused by reason of the natural good which is born of them. For as [sin](#) is the work of the [devil](#), whether derived from this source or from that; so is man, whether born of this or that, the work of [God](#)." Here, too, he has left out some words, in which he was afraid of catholic ears. For to come to the words here quoted, it had previously been said by us: "Because, then, we affirm this doctrine, which is contained in the oldest and unvarying rule of the catholic [faith](#), these propounders of novel and perverse dogmas, who deny that there is in infants any [sin](#) to be washed away in the laver of regeneration, in their unbelief or [ignorance](#) calumniate us as if we condemned marriage, and as if we asserted to be the [devil's](#) work what is God's own work, to wit, the human being which is born of marriage." All this passage he has passed over, and merely quoted the words which follow it, as given above. Now, in the omitted words he was afraid of the clause which suits all hearts in the catholic Church and appeals to the very [faith](#) which has been firmly established and transmitted from ancient times with unfaltering voice and excites their hostility most strongly against us. The clause is this: "They deny that there is in infants any [sin](#) to be washed away in the laver of regeneration." For all [persons](#) run to church with their infants for no other reason in the world than that the original [sin](#) which is contracted in them by their first and natural birth may be cleansed by the regeneration of their second birth.

Chapter 5.—The Same Continued.

He then returns to our words, which were quoted before: "We maintain that they who are born of such a union contract original [sin](#); and we do not deny that, of whatever [parents](#) they are born, they are still under the [devil's](#) dominion unless they be born again in [Christ](#)." Why he should again refer to these words of ours I cannot tell; he had already cited them a little before. He then proceeds to quote what we said of Christ: "Who willed not to be born from the same union of the two sexes." But here again he quietly ignored the words which I placed just previous to these words; my entire sentence being this: "That by His [grace](#) they may be removed from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Him who willed not to be born from the same union of the two sexes." Observe, I [pray](#) you, what my words were which he shunned, in the temper of one who is thoroughly opposed to that [grace](#) of God which comes through our "Lord Jesus Christ." He [knows](#) well enough that it is the height of improbity and impiety to exclude infants from their interest in the apostle's words, where he said of [God](#) the Father: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear son." [Colossians 1:13](#) This, no [doubt](#), is the reason why he preferred to omit rather than quote these words.

Chapter 6.—The Same Continued.

He has next adduced that passage of ours, wherein we said: "For there would have been none of this shame-producing concupiscence, which is impudently praised by impudent men, if man had not previously [sinned](#); while as to marriage, it would still have [existed](#), even if no man had [sinned](#): for the procreation of children would have been effected without this disease." Up to this point he cited my words; but he shrank from adding what comes next—"in the body of that chaste life, although without it this cannot be done in

'the body of this death.'" He would not complete my sentence, but mutilated it somewhat, because he dreaded the apostle's exclamation, of which my words gave him a reminder: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The [grace](#) of [God](#), through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 7:24](#) For the body of this death [existed](#) not in paradise before [sin](#); therefore did we say, "In the body of that chaste life," which was the life of paradise, "the procreation of children could have been effected without the disease, without which now in the body of this death it cannot be done." The apostle, however, before arriving at that mention of [man's](#) misery and God's [grace](#) which we have just quoted, had first said: "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my [mind](#), and bringing me into captivity to the law of [sin](#) which is in my members." Then it is that he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The [grace](#) of [God](#), through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the body of this death, therefore, such as it was in paradise before [sin](#), there certainly was not "another law in our members warring against the law of our mind"—which now, even when we are unwilling, and withhold consent, and use not our members to fulfil that which it desires, still dwells in these members, and harasses our resisting and repugnant mind. And this conflict in itself, although not involving condemnation, because it does not consummate [sin](#), is nevertheless "wretched," inasmuch as it has no peace. I think, then, that I have shown you clearly enough that this man had a special object as well as method in quoting my words: he adduced them for refutation in such manner as in some instances to interrupt the context of my sentences by removing what stood between them, and in other instances to curtail them by withdrawing their concluding words; and his reason for doing all this I think I have sufficiently explained.

Chapter 7 [III.]—Augustin Adduces a Passage Selected from the Preface of Julianus. (See "The Unfinished Work," i. 73.)

Let us now look at those words of ours which he adduced just as it suited him, and to which he would oppose his own. For they are followed by his words; moreover, as the person insinuated who sent you the paper of extracts, he copied something out of a preface, which was no [doubt](#) the preface of the books from which he selected a few passages. The paragraph thus copied stands as follows: "The teachers of our day, most [holy](#) brother, who are the instigators of the disgraceful faction which is now overheated with its [zeal](#), are determined on compassing the injury and discredit of the men with whose sacred fervour they are set on fire, by nothing less than the ruin of the whole [Church](#); little thinking how much [honour](#) they have conferred on those whose renown they have shown to be only capable of being destroyed along with the catholic religion. For, if one should say, either that there is [free will](#) in man, or that God is the Creator of those that are born, he is at once set down as a Cœlestian and a Pelagian. To avoid being called [heretics](#), they turn Manicheans; and so, while shirking a pretended [infamy](#), they incur a real reproach; just like the animals, which in hunting they surround with dyed feathers, in order to scare and drive them into their nets; the poor brutes are not gifted with reason, and so they are thrust all together by a vain panic into a real destruction."

Chapter 8.—Augustin Refutes the Passage Adduced Above.

Well, now, whoever you are that have said all this, what you say is by no means [true](#); by no means, I repeat; you are much deceived, or you aim at deceiving others. We do not deny [free will](#); but, even as the Truth declares, "if the Son shall make you free, then shall you be free indeed." [John 8:36](#) It is yourselves who invidiously deny this Liberator, since you ascribe a vain liberty to yourselves in your captivity. Captives you are; for "of whom a man is overcome," as the [Scripture](#) says, "of the same is he brought in bondage;" [2 Peter 2:19](#) and no one except by the [grace](#) of the great Liberator is loosed from the chain of this bondage, from which no man living is free. For "by one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all have [sinned](#)." [Romans 5:12](#) Thus, then, God is the Creator of those that are born in such wise that all pass from the one into condemnation, who have not the One Liberator by regeneration. For He is described as "the Potter, forming out of the same lump one vessel unto [honour](#) in His mercy, and another unto dishonour [Romans 9:21](#) in judgment." And so runs the Church's canticle "mercy and judgment." You are therefore only misleading yourself and others when you say, "If one should affirm, either that there is [free will](#) in man, or that God is the Creator of those that are born, he is at once set down as a Cœlestian and a Pelagian;" for the catholic [faith](#) says these things. If, however, any one says that there is a [free will](#) in man for worshipping God aright, without His assistance; and whosoever says that God is the Creator of those that are born in such wise as to deny that infants have any need of one to redeem them from the power of the [devil](#): that is the man who is set down as a [disciple](#) of Cœlestius and Pelagius. Therefore that men have within them a [free will](#), and that God is the Creator of those that are born, are propositions which we both allow. You are not Cœlestians and [Pelagians](#) for merely saying this. But what you do really say is this, that any man whatever has freedom enough of will for doing good without God's help, and that infants undergo no such change as being "delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the [kingdom of God](#);" [Colossians 1:13](#) and because you say so, you are Cœlestians and [Pelagians](#). Why, then, do you hide under the covering of a common dogma for deceit, concealing your own special delinquency which has gained for you a party-name; and why, to terrify the [ignorant](#) with a shocking term, do you say of us, "To avoid being called [heretics](#), they turn Manicheans?"

Chapter 9.—The Catholics Maintain the Doctrine of Original Sin, and Thus are Far from Being Manicheans.

Listen, then, for a little while, and observe what is involved in this question. [Catholics](#) say that [human nature](#) was created good by the good God as Creator; but that, having been corrupted by [sin](#), it needs the physician Christ. The Manicheans affirm, that [human nature](#) was not created by God good, and corrupted by [sin](#); but that man was formed by the prince of [eternal](#) darkness of a mixture of two [natures](#) which had ever [existed](#)—one good and the other [evil](#). The [Pelagians](#) and Cœlestians say that [human nature](#) was created good by the good [God](#); but that it is still so sound and healthy in infants at their birth, that they have no need at that age of [Christ's](#) medicine. Recognise, then, your name in your dogma; and cease from intruding upon the catholics, who refute you, a name and a

dogma which belong to others. For [truth](#) rejects both parties—the Manicheans and yourselves. To the Manicheans it says: "Have ye not read that He which made man at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this [cause](#) shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder." [Matthew 19:4-6](#) Now Christ shows, in this passage, that God is both the Creator of [man](#), and the uniter in marriage of husband and wife; whereas the Manicheans deny both these propositions. To you, however, He says: "The [Son of man](#) is come to seek and to save that which is lost." [Luke 19:10](#) But you, admirable [Christians](#) as you are, answer Christ: "If you came to seek and to save that which was lost, then you did not come for infants; for they were not lost, but are born in a state of [salvation](#): go to older men; we give you a rule from your own words: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'" [Matthew 9:12](#) Now, as it happens, the Manichean, who says that man has [evil](#) mixed in his nature, must wish his good [soul](#) at any rate to be saved by Christ; whereas you contend that there is in infants nothing to be sired by Christ, since they are already safe. And thus the Manichean besets [human nature](#) with his detestable censure, and you with your cruel praise. For whosoever shall [believe](#) your laudation, will never bring their babes to the Saviour. Entertaining such impious views as these, of what use is it that you fearlessly face that which is enacted for you in order to induce salutary [fear](#) and to treat you as a human being, and not as that poor animal of yours which was surrounded with the coloured feathers to be driven into the hunting toils? Need was that you should hold the [truth](#), and, on account of [zeal](#) for it, have no [fear](#); but, as things are, you evade [fear](#) in such wise that, if you feared, you would rather run away from the net of the malignant one than run into it. The reason why your catholic mother alarms you is, because she fears for both you and others from you; and if by the help of her sons who possess any authority in the State she acts with a view to make you afraid, she does so, not from cruelty, but from [love](#). You, however, are a very brave man; and you deem it the coward's part to be afraid of men. Well then, [fear God](#); and do not try with such obstinacy to subvert the ancient foundations of the catholic [faith](#). Although I could even wish that spirited temper of yours would entertain some little [fear](#) of human authority, at least in the present case. I could wish, I say, that it would rather tremble through cowardice than perish through audacity.

Chapter 10 [IV.]—In What Manner the Adversary's Cavils Must Be Refuted.

Let us now look at the rest of what he has joined together in his selections. But what should be my course of proceeding? Ought I to set forth every passage of his for the purpose of answering it, or, omitting everything which the catholic [faith](#) contains, as not in dispute between us, only handle and confute those statements in which he strays away from the beaten path of [truth](#), and endeavours to graft on catholic stems the poisonous shoots of his Pelagian [heresy](#)? This is, no [doubt](#), the easier course. But I suppose I must not lose sight of a possible contingency, that any one, after reading my book, without perusing all that has been alleged by him, may think that I was unwilling to bring forward the passages on which his allegations depend, and by which are shown to be [truly](#) deduced the statements which I am controverting as false. I should be glad, therefore, if

the reader will without exception kindly observe and consider the two classes of contributions which occur in this little work of ours—that is to say, all that he has alleged, and the answers which on my side I give him.

Chapter 11.—The Devil the Author, Not of Nature, But Only of Sin.

Now, the man who forwarded to your Love the paper in question has introduced the contents thereof with this title: "In opposition to those [persons](#) who condemn matrimony, and ascribe its fruits to the [devil](#)." This, then, is not in opposition to us, who neither condemn matrimony, which we even commend in its order with a just commendation, nor ascribe its fruits to the [devil](#). For the fruits of matrimony are men which are orderly engendered from it, and not the [sins](#) which accompany their birth. Human beings are not under the [devil's](#) dominion because they are human beings, in which respect they are the fruits of matrimony; but because they are sinful, in which resides the transmission of their [sins](#). For the [devil](#) is the author of [sin](#), not of nature.

Chapter 12.—Eve's Name Means Life, and is a Great Sacrament of the Church.

Now, observe the rest of the passage in which he thinks he finds, to our prejudice, what is consonant with the above-quoted title. "[God](#)," says he, "who had framed Adam out of the dust of the ground, formed Eve out of his rib, [Genesis 2:22-23](#) and said, She shall be called Life, because she is the mother of all who live." Well now, it is not so written. But what matters that to us? For it constantly happens that our memory fails in verbal accuracy, while the sense is still maintained. Nor was it [God](#), but her husband, who gave Eve her name, which should signify *Life*; for thus it is written: "And Adam called his wife's name Life, because she is the mother of all living." But very likely he might have understood the [Scripture](#) as testifying that God gave Eve this name through Adam, as His [prophet](#). For in that she was called Life, and the mother of all living, there lies a great sacrament of the [Church](#), of which it would detain us long to speak, and which is unnecessary to our present undertaking. The very same thing which the apostle says, "This is a great sacrament: but I speak concerning Christ and the [Church](#)," was also spoken by Adam when he said, "For this [cause](#) shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." The Lord Jesus, however, in the [Gospel](#) mentions God as having said this of Eve; and the reason, no [doubt](#), is, that God declared through the man what the man, in fact, uttered as a [prophecy](#). Now, observe what follows in the paper of extracts: "By that primitive name," says he, "He showed for what labour the [woman](#) had been provided; and He said accordingly, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" [Genesis 1:28](#) Now, who amongst ourselves denies that the [woman](#) was provided for the work of child-bearing by the [Lord God](#), the beneficent Creator of all good? See further what he goes on to say: "[God](#), therefore, who created them male and female, [Genesis 1:27](#) furnished them with members suitable for procreation, and ordained that bodies should be produced from bodies; and yet is security for their capacity for effecting the work, executing all that exists with that power which He used in creation." Well, even this we acknowledge to be

catholic doctrine, as we also do with regard to the passage which he immediately subjoins: "If, then, offspring comes only through sex, and sex only through the body, and the body through [God](#), who can hesitate to allow that fecundity is rightly attributed to God?"

Chapter 13.—The Pelagian Argument to Show that the Devil Has No Rights in the Fruits of Marriage.

After these [true](#) and catholic statements, which are, moreover, really contained in the [Holy Scriptures](#), although they are not adduced by him in a catholic spirit, with the earnestness of a catholic [mind](#), he loses no time in introducing to us the [heresy](#) of Pelagius and Cœlestius, for which purpose he wrote, indeed, his previous remarks. Mark carefully the following words: "You now who say, 'We do not deny that they, are still, of whatever [parents](#) born, under the [devil's](#) power, unless they be born again in [Christ](#),' show us what the [devil](#) can recognise as his own in the sexes, by reason of which he can (to use your phrase) rightly claim as his property the fruit which they produce. Is it the *difference* of the sexes? But this is inherent in the bodies which God made. Is it their union? But this union is justified in the privilege of the primeval blessing no less than institution. For it is the voice of God that says, 'A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.' [Genesis 2:24](#) It is again the voice of God which says, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.' [Genesis 1:28](#) Or is it, perchance, their *fertility*? But this is the very reason why matrimony was instituted."

Chapter 14 [V.]—Concupiscence Alone, in Marriage, is Not of God.

You see the terms of his question to us: what the [devil](#) can find in the sexes to call his own, by reason of which they should be in his power, who are born of [parents](#) of whatsoever kind, unless they be born again in Christ; he asks us, moreover, whether it is the difference in the sexes which we ascribe to the [devil](#), or their union, or their very fruitfulness. We answer, then, nothing of these qualities, inasmuch as the difference of sex belongs to "the vessels" of the [parents](#); while the union of the two pertains to the procreation of children; and their fruitfulness to the blessing pronounced on the marriage institution. But all these things are of [God](#); yet amongst them he was unwilling to name that "[lust](#) of the flesh, which is not of the [Father](#), but is of the world;" [1 John 2:16](#) and "of this world" the [devil](#) is said to be "the prince." [John 14:30](#) Now, the [devil](#) found no carnal concupiscence in the [Lord](#), because the Lord did not come as a man to men by its means. Accordingly, He says Himself: "The prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in me" [John 14:30](#) —nothing, that is, of [sin](#); neither that which is derived from birth, nor that which is added during life. Among all the natural goods of procreation which he mentioned, he was, I repeat, unwilling to name this particular fact of concupiscence, over which even marriage blushes, which glories in all these before-mentioned goods. For why is the special work of [parents](#) withdrawn and hidden even from the eyes of their children, except that it is impossible for them to be occupied in laudable procreation without shameful [lust](#)? Because of this it was that even they were ashamed who first covered their nakedness. [Genesis 3:7](#) These portions of their person were not suggestive of shame

before, but deserved to be commended and praised as the work of [God](#). They put on their covering when they felt their shame, and they felt their shame when, after their own disobedience to their Maker, they felt their members disobedient to themselves. Our quoter of extracts likewise felt ashamed of this concupiscence. For he mentioned the difference of the sexes; he mentioned also their union, and he mentioned their fertility; but this last concomitant of [lust](#) he blushed to mention. And no wonder if mere talkers are ashamed of that which we see [parents](#) themselves, so interested in their function, blush to think of.

Chapter 15.—Man, by Birth, is Placed Under the Dominion of the Devil Through Sin; We Were All One in Adam When He Sinned.

He then proceeds to ask: "Why, then, are they in the [devil's](#) power whom God created?" And he finds an answer to his own question apparently from a phrase of mine. "Because of [sin](#)," says he, "not because of nature." Then framing his answer in reference to mine, he says: "But as there cannot be offspring without the sexes, so there cannot be [sin](#) without the will." Yes, indeed, such is the [truth](#). For even as "by one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); so also has death passed through to all [men](#), for in him all have [sinned](#)." [Romans 5:12](#) By the [evil](#) will of that one man all [sinned](#) in him, since all were that one man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original [sin](#). "For you allege," says he, "that the reason why they are in the [devil's](#) power is because they are born of the union of the two sexes." I plainly aver that it is by reason of transgression that they are in the [devil's](#) power, and that their participation, moreover, of this transgression is due to the circumstance that they are born of the said union of the sexes, which cannot even accomplish its own [honourable](#) function without the incident of shameful [lust](#). This has also, in fact, been said by Ambrose, of most blessed memory, [bishop](#) of the church in Milan, when he gives as the reason why Christ's birth in the flesh was free from all sinful fault, that His conception was not the result of a union of the two sexes; whereas there is not one among human beings conceived in such union who is without [sin](#). These are his precise words: "On that account, and being man, He was tried by every sort of [temptation](#), and in the likeness of man He bore them all; inasmuch, however, as He was born of the [Spirit](#), He abstained from all [sin](#). For every man is a liar, and none is without [sin](#), but [God](#) only. It has accordingly," adds he, "been constantly observed, that clearly no one who is born of a man and a [woman](#), that is to say, through the union of their bodies, is free from [sin](#); for whoever is free from [sin](#) is free also from conception of this kind." Well now, will you dare, you [disciples](#) of Pelagius and Cœlestius, to call this man a Manichean? as the [heretic](#) Jovinian did, when the [holy bishop](#) maintained the permanent [virginity](#) of the blessed Mary even after child-bearing, in opposition to this man's impiety. If, however, you do not dare to call him a Manichean, why do you call us Manicheans when we defend the catholic [faith](#) in the self-same [cause](#) and with the self same opinions? But if you will taunt that most faithful man with having entertained Manichean [error](#) in this matter, there is no help for it, you must enjoy your taunts as best you may, and so fill up Jovinian's measure more fully; as for ourselves, we can patiently endure along with such a man of God your taunts and jibes. And yet your heresiarch Pelagius commends Ambrose's [faith](#) and extreme purity in the [knowledge](#) of the [Scriptures](#) so greatly, as to declare that not even an enemy could venture to find fault with him. Observe, then, to

what length you have gone, and refrain from following any further in the audacious steps of Jovinian. And yet that man, although by his excessive commendation of marriage he put it on a par with [holy virginity](#), never denied the necessity of Christ to save those who are born of marriage even fresh from their mother's womb, and to redeem them from the power of the [devil](#). This, however, you deny; and because we oppose you in defence of those who cannot yet speak for themselves, and in defence of the very foundations of the catholic [faith](#), you taunt us, with being Manicheans. But let us now see what comes next.

Chapter 16 [VI.]—It is Not of Us, But Our Sins, that the Devil is the Author.

He puts to us, then, another question, saying, "Whom, then, do you confess to be the author of infants? The [true](#) God?" I answer: "Yes; the [true](#) God." He then remarks, "But He did not make [evil](#);" and again asks, "Whether we confess the [devil](#) to be the creator of infants?" Then again he answers, "But *he* did not create [human nature](#)." He then closes the subject, as it were, with this inference: "Since union is [evil](#), and the condition of our bodies is degraded, therefore you ascribe our bodies to an [evil](#) creator." My answer to this is, I do not ascribe to an [evil](#) creator our bodies, but our [sins](#); by reason of which it came to pass that, whereas in our bodies, that is to say, in what God has made, all was [honourable](#) and well-pleasing, there yet accrued in the intercourse of male and female what caused shame, so that their union was not such as might have been in the body of that unimpaired life, but such as we see with a blush in the body of this death. "But [God](#)," says he, "has divided in sex what He would unite in operation. So that from Him comes the union of bodies, from whom first came the creation of bodies." We have already furnished an answer to this statement, when we said that these bodies are of [God](#). But as regards the disobedience of the members of these bodies, this comes through the [lust](#) of the flesh which "is not of the Father." [1 John 2:16](#) He goes on to say, that "it is impossible for [evil](#) fruits to spring from so many [good](#) things, such as bodies, sexes, and their unions; or that human beings should be made by God for the purpose of their being, by lawful right, as you maintain, held in possession by the [devil](#)." Now it has been already affirmed, that they are not thus held because they are men, which designation belongs to their nature, of which the [devil](#) is not the author; but because they are sinners, which designation is the result of that fault of nature of which the [devil](#) is the author.

Chapter 17 [VII.]—The Pelagians are Not Ashamed to Eulogize Concupiscence, Although They are Ashamed to Mention Its Name.

But among so many names of [good](#) things, such as bodies, sexes, unions, he never once mentions the [lust](#) or concupiscence of the flesh. He is silent, because he is ashamed; and yet with a strange shamelessness of shame (if the expression may be used), he is not ashamed to praise what he is ashamed to mention. Now just observe how he prefers to point to his object by circumlocution rather than by direct mention of it. "After that the man," says he, "by natural appetite [knew](#) his wife." See again, he refused to say, He [knew](#) his wife by carnal concupiscence; but he used the phrase, "by natural appetite," by which it is open to us to understand that [holy](#) and [honourable](#) will which wills the procreation of

children, and not that [lust](#), of which even he is so much ashamed, forsooth, that he prefers to use ambiguous language to us, to expressing his mind in unmistakeable words. "Now what is the meaning of his phrase—"by natural appetite"? Is not both the wish to be saved and the wish to beget, nourish, and educate children, natural appetite? and is it not likewise of reason, and not of [lust](#)? Since, however, we can ascertain his intention, we are pretty sure that he meant by these words to indicate the [lust](#) of the organs of generation. Do not the words in question appear to you to be the fig-leaves, under cover of which is hidden nothing else but that which he feels ashamed of? For just as they of old sewed the leaves together [Genesis 3:7](#) as a girdle of concealment, so has this man woven a web of circumlocution to hide his meaning. Let him weave out his statement: "But when the man [knew](#) his wife by natural appetite, the [divine Scripture](#) says, Eve conceived, and bare a son, and called his name Cain. But what," he adds, "does Adam say? Let us hear: I have obtained a man from [God](#). So that it is evident that he was God's work, and the [divine Scripture](#) testifies to his having been received from [God](#)." [Genesis 4:1](#) Well, who can entertain a [doubt](#) on this point? Who can deny this statement, especially if he be a catholic [Christian](#)? A man is God's work; but carnal concupiscence (without which, if [sin](#) had not preceded, man would have been begotten by means of the organs of generation, not less [obedient](#) than the other members to a quiet and normal will) is not of the [Father](#), but is of the world. [1 John 2:16](#)

Chapter 18.—The Same Continued.

But now, I [pray](#) you, look a little more attentively, and observe how he contrives to find a name wherewith to cover again what he blushes to unfold. "For," says he, "Adam begot him by the power of his members, not by diversity of merits." Now I confess I do not understand what he meant by the latter clause, *not by diversity of merits*; but when he said, "by the power of his members," I [believe](#) he wished to express what he is ashamed to say openly and clearly. He preferred to use the phrase, "by the power of his members," rather than say, "by the [lust](#) of the flesh." Plainly—even if the thought did not occur to him—he intimated a something which has an evident application to the subject. For what is more powerful than a man's members, when they are not in due submission to a man's will? Even if they be restrained by [temperance](#) or continence, their use and control are not in any man's power. Adam, then, begot his sons by what our author calls "the power of his members," over which, before he begot them, he blushed, after his [sin](#). If, however, he had never [sinned](#), he would not have begotten them by the *power*, but in the *obedience*, of his members. For he would himself have had the *power* to rule them as subjects to his will, if he, too, by the same will had only submitted himself as a subject to a more powerful One.

Chapter 19 [VIII.]—The Pelagians Misunderstand "Seed" In Scripture.

He goes on to say: "After a while the [divine Scripture](#) says again, 'Adam [knew](#) Eve his wife; and she bare a son, and he called his name Seth: saying, The Lord has raised me up another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.'" He then adds: "The Divinity is said to have raised up the seed itself; as a [proof](#) that the sexual union was His appointment." This

person did not understand what the [Scripture](#) records; for he supposed that the reason why it is said, The Lord has raised me up another seed instead of Abel, was none other than that God might be supposed to have excited in him a desire for sexual intercourse, by means whereof seed might be raised for being poured into the [woman's](#) womb. He was perfectly unaware that what the [Scripture](#) has said is not "Has raised me up seed" in the sense he uses, but only as meaning "Has given me a son." Indeed, Adam did not use the words in question after his sexual intercourse, when he emitted his seed, but after his wife's confinement, in which he received his son by the gift of [God](#). For what gratification is there (except perhaps for lascivious [persons](#), and those who, as the apostle says with prohibition, "possess their vessel in the [lust](#) of concupiscence") [in the mere shedding of seed as the ultimate pleasure of sexual union, unless it is followed by the true](#) and proper fruit of marriage—conception and birth?

Chapter 20.—Original Sin is Derived from the Faulty Condition of Human Seed.

This, however, I would not say, as implying at all that we must look for some other creator than the supreme and [true God](#), of either human seed or of man himself who comes from the seed; but as meaning, that the seed would have issued from the human being by the quiet and normal [obedience](#) of his members to his will's command, if [sin](#) had not preceded. The question now before us does not concern the [nature](#) of human seed, but its corruption. Now the *nature* has God for its author; it is from its corruption that original [sin](#) is derived. If, indeed, the seed had itself no corruption, what means that passage in the Book of Wisdom, "Not being [ignorant](#) that they were a naughty generation, and that their [malice](#) was inbred, and that their cogitation would never be changed; for their seed was accursed from the beginning"? [Wisdom 12:10-11](#) Now whatever may be the particular application of these words, they are spoken of [mankind](#). How, then, is the [malice](#) of every man inbred, and his seed cursed from the beginning, unless it be in respect of the fact, that "by one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all have [sinned](#)"? [Romans 5:12](#) But where is the man whose "[evil](#) cogitation can never be changed," unless because it cannot be effected by himself, but only by [divine grace](#); without the assistance of which, what are human beings, but that which the Apostle Peter says of them, when he describes them as "natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed"? [2 Peter 2:12](#) Accordingly, the [Apostle Paul](#), in a certain passage, having both conditions in view,—even the [wrath](#) of God with which we are born, and the [grace](#) whereby we are delivered,—says: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the [lusts](#) of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of [wrath](#), even as others. But [God](#), who is rich in mercy, for His great [love](#) wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in [sins](#), has quickened us together with Christ; by whose [grace](#) we are saved." [Ephesians 2:3-5](#) What, then, is man's "natural [malice](#)," and "the seed cursed from the beginning;" and what are "the natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed," and what the "by nature children of [wrath](#)"? Was this the condition of the nature which was formed in Adam? God forbid! Inasmuch as his pure nature, however, was corrupted in him, it has run on in this condition by natural descent through all, and still is running;

so that there is no deliverance for it from this ruin, except by the [grace](#) of God through [our Lord Jesus Christ](#).

Chapter 21 [IX.]—It is the Good God That Gives Fruitfulness, and the Devil That Corrupts the Fruit.

What, therefore, is this man's meaning, in the next passage, wherein he says concerning [Noah](#) and his sons, that "they were blessed, even as [Adam](#) and [Eve](#) were; for God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and have dominion over the earth'"? [Genesis 9:1](#) To these words of the Almighty he added some of his own, saying: "Now that pleasure, which you would have seem diabolical, was resorted to in the case of the above-mentioned married pairs; and it continued to exist, both in the goodness of its institution and in the blessing attached to it. For there can be no [doubt](#) that the following words were addressed to [Noah](#) and his sons in reference to their bodily connection with their wives, which had become by this time unalterably fixed by use: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" It is unnecessary for us to employ many words in repeating our former argument. The point here in question is the corruption in our nature, whereby its goodness has been depraved, of which corruption the [devil](#) is the author. That goodness of nature, as it is in itself, the author of which is [God](#), is not the question we have to consider. Now God has never withdrawn from corrupted and depraved nature His own mercy and goodness, so as to deprive man of fruitfulness, vivacity, and health, as well as the very substance of his mind and body, his senses also and reason, as well as food, and nourishment, and growth. He, moreover, "makes His sun to arise on the [evil](#) and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the [unjust](#);" [Matthew 5:45](#) and all that is [good](#) in [human nature](#) is from the good [God](#), even in the case of those men who will not be delivered from [evil](#).

Chapter 22.—Shall We Be Ashamed of What We Do, or of What God Does?

It is, however, of *pleasure* that this man spoke in his passage, because pleasure can be even [honourable](#): of carnal concupiscence, or [lust](#), which produces shame, he made no mention. In some subsequent words, however, he uncovered his susceptibility of shame; and he was unable to dissemble what nature herself has prescribed so forcibly. "There is also," says he, "that statement: 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.'" Then after these words of [God](#), he goes on to offer some of his own, saying: "That he might express [faith](#) in works, the [prophet](#) approached very near to a perilling of modesty." What a confession! How clear and extorted from him by the force of [truth](#)! The [prophet](#), it would seem, to express [faith](#) in works, almost imperilled modesty, when he said, "They twain shall become one flesh;" wishing it to be understood of the sexual union of the male and the female. Let the [cause](#) be alleged, why the [prophet](#), in expressing the works of [God](#), should approach so near an imperilling of modesty? Is it then the case that the works of man ought not to produce shame, but must be gloried in at all events, and that the works of God must produce shame? Is it, that in setting forth and expressing the works of God the [prophet's](#) [love](#) or labour receives no [honour](#), but his modesty is imperilled? What, then, was it

possible for [God](#) to do, which it would be a shame for His [prophet](#) to describe? And, what is a weightier question still, could a man be ashamed of any work which not man, but [God](#), has made in man? whereas workmen in all cases strive, with all the labour and diligence in their power, to avoid shame in the works of their own hands. The [truth](#), however, is, that we are ashamed of that very thing which made those primitive human beings ashamed, when they covered their loins. That is the penalty of [sin](#); that is the plague and mark of [sin](#); that is the [temptation](#) and very fuel of [sin](#); that is the law in our members warring against the law of our mind; that is the rebellion against our own selves, proceeding from our very selves, which by a most righteous retribution is rendered us by our disobedient members. It is this which makes us ashamed, and [justly](#) ashamed. If it were not so, what could be more ungrateful, more irreligious in us, if in our members we were to suffer confusion of face, not for our own fault or penalty, but because of the works of God?

Chapter 23 [X.]—The Pelagians Affirm that God in the Case of Abraham and Sarah Aroused Concupiscence as a Gift from Heaven.

He has much also to say, though to no purpose, concerning [Abraham](#) and Sarah, how they received a son according to the promise; and at last he mentions the word *concupiscence*. But he does not add the usual phrase, "of the flesh," because this is the very thing which causes the shame. Whereas, on account of concupiscence there is sometimes a call for boasting, inasmuch as there is a concupiscence of the spirit against the flesh, [Galatians 5:17](#) and a concupiscence of wisdom. Accordingly, he says: "Now you have certainly defined as naturally [evil](#) this concupiscence which is indispensable for fecundity; whence comes it, therefore, that it is aroused in aged men by the gift of [Heaven](#)? Make it clear then, if you can, that that belongs to the [devil's](#) work, which you see is conferred by God as a gift." He says this, just as if concupiscence of the flesh had been previously wanting in them, and as if God had bestowed it upon them. No [doubt](#) it was inherent in this body of death; that fecundity, however, was wanting of which God is the author; and this was actually given whensoever God willed to confer the gift. Be it, however, far from us to affirm, what he thought we meant to say, that Isaac was begotten without the heat of sexual union.

Chapter 24 [XI.]—What Covenant of God the New-Born Babe Breaks. What Was the Value of Circumcision.

But let him inform us how it was that his [soul](#) would be cut off from his people if he had not been [circumcised](#) on the eighth day. How could he have so [sinned](#), how so offended [God](#), as to be punished for the neglect of others towards him with so severe a sentence, had there been no original [sin](#) in the case? For thus ran the commandment of God concerning the [circumcision](#) of infants: "The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not [circumcised](#) on the eighth day, his [soul](#) shall be cut off from his people; because he has broken my covenant." [Genesis 17:14](#) Let him tell us, if he can, how that child broke God's covenant,—an innocent babe, so far as he was personally concerned, of eight days' age; and yet there is by no means any [falsehood](#) uttered here by God or [Holy](#)

Scripture. The fact is, the covenant of God which he then broke was not this which commanded circumcision, but that which forbade the tree; when "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all have sinned." Romans 5:12 And in his case the expiation of this was signified by the circumcision of the eighth day, that is, by the sacrament of the Mediator who was to be incarnate. For it was through this same faith in Christ, who was to come in the flesh, and was to die for us, and on the third day (which coming after the seventh or Sabbath day, was to be the eighth) to rise again, that even holy men were saved of old. For "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Romans 4:25 Ever since circumcision was instituted amongst the people of God, which was at that time the sign of the righteousness of faith, it availed also to signify the cleansing even in infants of the original and primitive sin, just as baptism in like manner from the time of its institution began to be of avail for the renewal of man. Not that there was no justification by faith before circumcision; for even when he was still in uncircumcision, Abraham was himself justified by faith, being the father of those nations which should also imitate his faith. Romans 4:10-11 In former times, however, the sacramental mystery of justification by faith lay concealed in every mode. Still it was the self-same faith in the Mediator which saved the saints of old, both small and great—not the old covenant, "which genders to bondage;" Galatians 4:24 not the law, which was not so given as to be able to give life; Galatians 3:21 but the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 7:25 For as we believe that Christ has come in the flesh, so they believed that He was to come; as, again, we believe that He has died, so they believed that He would die; and as we believe that He has risen from the dead, so they believed that He would rise again; while both we and they believe alike, that He will hereafter come to judge the quick and the dead. Let not this man, then, throw any hindrance in the way of its salvation upon human nature, by setting up a bad defence of its merits; because we are all born under sin, and are delivered therefrom by the only One who was born without sin.

Chapter 25 [XII.]—Augustin Not the Deviser of Original Sin.

"This sexual connection of bodies," he says, "together with the ardour, with the pleasure, with the emission of seed, was made by God, and is praiseworthy on its own account, and is therefore to be approved; it, moreover, became sometimes even a great gift to pious men." He distinctly and severally repeated the phrases, "with ardour," "with pleasure," "with emission of seed." He did not, however, venture to say, "with lust." Why is this, if it be not that he is ashamed to name what he does not blush to praise? A gift, indeed, for pious men is the prosperous propagation of children; but not that shame-producing excitement of the members, which our nature would not feel were it in a sound state, although corrupted nature now experiences it. On this account, indeed, it is that he who is born of it requires to be born again, in order that he may be a member of Christ; and that he of whom he is born, even though he be already born again, wants to be freed from that which exists in this body of death by reason of the law of sin. Now since this is the case, how is it he goes on to say, "You must, therefore, of necessity confess that the original sin which you had devised is done away with"? It was not I who devised the original sin, which the catholic faith holds from ancient times; but you, who deny it, are undoubtedly

an innovating [heretic](#). In the judgment of [God](#), all are in the [devil's](#) power, born in [sin](#), unless they are regenerated in [Christ](#).

Chapter 26 [XIII.]—The Child in No Sense Formed by Concupiscence.

But as he was speaking of [Abraham](#) and Sarah, he goes on to say: "If, indeed, you were to affirm that the natural use was strong in them, and there was no offspring, my answer will be: Whom the Creator promised, the Creator also gave; the child which is born is not the work of cohabitation, but of [God](#). He, indeed, who made the first man of the dust, fashions all [men](#) out of seed. As, therefore, the dust of the earth, which was taken as the material, was not the author of man; so likewise that power of sexual pleasure which forms and commingles the seminal elements does not complete the entire process of [man's](#) making, but rather presents to [God](#), out of the treasures of nature, material with which He vouchsafes to make the human being." Now the whole of this statement of his, except where he says, that the seminal elements are formed and commingled by sexual pleasure, would be correctly expressed by him were he only earnest in making it to defend the catholic sense. To us, however, who are fully aware what he strives to make out of it, he speaks indeed correctly in a perverse manner. The exceptional statement to the general [truth](#), which I do not deny belongs to this passage, is untrue for this reason, because the pleasure in question of carnal concupiscence does not form the seminal elements. These are already in the body, and are formed by the same [true](#) God who created the body itself. They do not receive their [existence](#) from the libidinous pleasure, but are excited and emitted in company with it. Whether, indeed, such pleasure accompanies the commingling of the seminal elements of the two sexes in the womb, is a question which perhaps [women](#) may be able to determine from their inmost feelings; but it is improper for us to push an idle curiosity so far. That concupiscence, however, which we have to be ashamed of, and the shame of which has given to our secret members their shameful designation, *pudenda*, had no [existence](#) in the body during its life in paradise before the entrance of [sin](#); but it began to exist "in the body of this death" after [sin](#), the rebellion of the members retaliating man's own disobedience. Without this concupiscence it was quite possible to effect the function of the wedded pair in the procreation of children: just as many a laborious work is accomplished by the compliant operation of our other limbs, without any lascivious heat; for they are simply moved by the direction of the will, not excited by the ardour of concupiscence.

Chapter 27.—The Pelagians Argue that God Sometimes Closes the Womb in Anger, and Opens It When Appeased.

Carefully consider the rest of his remarks: "This likewise," says he, "is confirmed by the apostle's authority. For when the [blessed Paul](#) spoke of the resurrection of the dead, he said, "You fool, that which you sow is not quickened." [1 Corinthians 15:36](#) And afterwards, 'But God gives it a body as it pleases Him, and to every seed its own body.' If, therefore, [God](#)," says he, "has assigned to human seed, as to every thing else, its own proper body, which no wise or [pious](#) man will deny, how will you prove that any person is born guilty? Do, I beg of you, reflect with what a noose this assertion of natural [sin](#) is

choked. But come," he says, "deal more gently with yourself, I [pray](#) you. Believe me, God made even you: it must, however, be confessed, that a serious [error](#) has infected you. For what profaner opinion can be broached than that either God did not make man, or else that He made him for the [devil](#); or, at any rate, that the [devil](#) framed God's image, that is, man,—which clearly is a statement not more absurd than impious? Is then," says he, "[God](#) so poor in resources, so lacking in all sense of propriety, as not to have had anything which He could confer on [holy](#) men as their reward, except what the [devil](#), after making them his dupes, might infuse into them for their vitiation? Would you like to [know](#), however, that even in the case of those who are no [saints](#), God can be [proved](#) to have bestowed this power of procreation of children? When [Abraham](#), struck with [fear](#) among a foreign nation, said that Sarah, his wife, was his sister, it is said that Abimelech, the king of the country, abducted her for a night's enjoyment of her. But [God](#), who had the [holy woman's honour](#) in His keeping, appeared to Abimelech in his sleep, and restrained the royal audacity; threatening him with death if he went to the length of violating the wife. Then Abimelech said: 'Will you, O Lord, slay an innocent and righteous nation? Did they not tell me that they were brother and sister? Therefore Abimelech arose early in the morning, and took a thousand pieces of silver, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and [women](#)-servants, and gave them to [Abraham](#), and sent away his wife untouched. But [Abraham](#) [prayed](#) unto God for Abimelech; and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants.'" Now why he narrated all this at so great a length, you may find in these few words which he added: "[God](#)," he says, "at the [prayer](#) of [Abraham](#), restored their potency of generation, which had been taken away from the wombs of even the meanest servants; because God had closed up every womb in the house of Abimelech. [Genesis 20:18](#) Consider now," says he, "whether that ought to be called a natural [evil](#) which sometimes God when [angry](#) takes away, and when appeased restores. He," says he, "makes the children both of the [pious](#) and of the ungodly, inasmuch as the circumstance of their being [parents](#) appertains to that nature which rejoices in God as its Author, while the fact of their impiety belongs to the depravity of their desires, and this comes to every person whatever as the consequence of [free will](#)."

Chapter 28 [XIV.]—Augustin's Answer to This Argument. Its Dealing with Scripture.

Now to this lengthy statement of his we have to say in answer, that, in the passages which he has quoted from the sacred writings, there is nothing said about that shameful [lust](#), which we say did not exist in the body of our first [parents](#) in their blessedness, when they were naked and were not ashamed. [Genesis 2:25](#) The first passage from the apostle was spoken of the seeds of corn, which first die in order to be quickened. For some reason or other, he was unwilling to complete the verse for his quotation. All he adduces from it is: "You fool, that which you sow is not quickened;" but the apostle adds, "except it die." [1 Corinthians 15:36](#) This writer, however, so far as I can judge, wished this passage, which treats only of corn seeds, to be understood of human seed, by such as read it without either understanding the [Holy Scriptures](#) or recollecting them. Indeed, he not merely curtailed this particular sentence, by omitting the clause, "except it die," but he omitted the following words, in which the apostle explained of what seeds he was

speaking; for the apostle adds: "And that which you sow, you sow not that body which shall be, but the bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain."

[1 Corinthians 15:37](#) This he omitted, and closed up his context with what the apostle then writes: "But God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed its own body;" just as if the apostle spoke of man in cohabitation when he said, "You fool, that which you sow is not quickened," with a view to our understanding of human seed, that it is quickened by [God](#), not by man in cohabitation begetting children. For he had previously said: "Sexual pleasure does not complete the entire process of [man's](#) making, but rather presents to [God](#), out of the treasures of nature, material with which He vouchsafes to make the human being." He then added the quotation, as if the apostle affirmed as follows: You fool, that which you sow is not quickened,—quickened, that is, by yourself; but God forms the human being out of your seed. As if the apostle had not said the intermediate words, which this writer chose to pass over; and as if the apostle's aim was to speak of human seed thus: "You fool, that which you sow is not quickened; but God gives to the seed a body such as pleases Him, and to every seed its own body." Indeed, after the apostle's words, he introduces remarks of his own to this effect: "If, therefore, God has assigned to human seed, as to everything else, its own proper body, which no wise or [pious](#) man will deny;" quite as if the apostle in the passage in question spoke of human seed.

Chapter 29.—The Same Continued. Augustin Also Asserts that God Forms Man at Birth.

Though I have given special attention to the point, I have failed to discover what assistance he could obtain from this deceitful use of Scripture, except that he wanted to produce the apostle as a [witness](#), and by him to prove, what we also assert, that God forms man of human seed. And inasmuch as no passage directly occurred to him, he deceitfully manipulated this particular one; fearing no [doubt](#) that, if the apostle should chance to seem to have spoken of corn seeds, and not of human, in this passage, we should have suggested to us at once by such procedure of his, how to refute him: not indeed as the pure-minded advocate of a chastened will, but as the impudent proclaimer of a profligate voluptuousness. But from the very seeds, forsooth, which the farmers sow in their fields he can be refuted. For why can we not suppose that God could have granted to man in his [happy](#) state in paradise, the same course with regard to his own seed which we see granted to the seeds of corn, in such wise that the former might be sown without any shameful [lust](#), the members of generation simply [obeying](#) the inclination of the will; just as the latter is sown without any shameful [lust](#), the hands of the husbandman merely moving in [obedience](#) to his will? There being, indeed, this difference, that the desire of begetting children in the parent is a nobler one than that which characterizes the farmer, of filling his barns. Then, again, why might not the almighty Creator, with His incontaminable ubiquity, and his power of creating from human seed just what it pleased Him, have operated in [women](#), with respect to what He even now makes, in the self-same manner as He operates in the ground with corn seeds according to His [will](#), making blessed mothers conceive without lustful passion, and bring forth children without parturient pains, inasmuch as there was not (in that state of [happiness](#), and in the body which was not as yet the body of this death, but rather of that life) in [woman](#) when

receiving seed anything to produce shame, as there was nothing when giving birth to offspring to [cause](#) pain? Whoever refuses to [believe](#) this, or is unwilling to have it supposed that, while men previous to any [sin](#) lived in that [happy](#) state of paradise, such a condition as that which we have sketched could not have been permitted in [God's will](#) and kindness, must be regarded as the lover of shameful pleasure, rather than the encomiast of desirable fecundity.

Chapter 30 [XV.]—The Case of Abimelech and His House Examined.

Then, again, as to the passage which he has adduced from the inspired history concerning Abimelech, and God's choosing to close up every womb in his household that the [women](#) should not bear children, and afterwards opening them that they might become fruitful, what is all this to the point? What has it to do with that shameful concupiscence which is now the question in dispute? Did [God](#), then, deprive those [women](#) of this feeling, and give it to them again just when He liked? The punishment however, was that they were unable to bear children, and the blessing that they were able to bear them, after the manner of this corruptible flesh. For God would not confer such a blessing upon this body of death, as only that body of life in paradise could have had before [sin](#) entered; that is, the process of conceiving without the prurience of [lust](#), and of bearing children without excruciating pain. But why should we not suppose, since, indeed, Scripture says that every womb was closed, that this took place with something of pain, so that the [women](#) were unable to bear cohabitation, and that God inflicted this pain in His [wrath](#), and removed it in His mercy? For if [lust](#) was to be taken away as an impediment to begetting offspring, it ought to have been taken away from the men, not from the [women](#). For a [woman](#) might perform her share in cohabitation by her will, even if the [lust](#) ceased by which she is stimulated, provided it were not absent from the man for exciting him; unless, perhaps (as Scripture informs us that even Abimelech himself was healed), he would tell us that virile concupiscence was restored to him. If, however, it were [true](#) that he had lost this, what necessity was there that he should be warned by God to hold no connection with [Abraham's](#) wife? The [truth](#) is, Abimelech is said to have been healed, because his household was cured of the affliction which smote it.

Chapter 31 [XVI.]—Why God Proceeds to Create Human Beings, Who He Knows Will Be Born in Sin.

Let us now look at those three clauses of his, than which three, he says, nothing more profane could possibly be uttered: "Either God did not make man, or else He made him for the [devil](#); or, at any rate, the [devil](#) framed God's image, that is, man." Now, the first and the last of these sentences, even he himself must allow, if he be not reckless and perverse, were never uttered by us. The dispute is confined to that which he puts second between the other two. In respect of this, he is so far mistaken as to suppose that we had said that God made man for the [devil](#); as if, in the case of human beings whom God creates of human [parents](#), His care and purpose and provision were, that by means of His workmanship the [devil](#) should have as slaves those whom he is unable to make for himself. God forbid that any sort of [pious](#) belief, however childish, should ever entertain

such a sentiment as this! Of His own goodness God has made man—the first without [sin](#), all others under [sin](#)—for the purposes of His own profound thoughts. For just as He [knew](#) full well what to do with reference to the [malice](#) of the [devil](#) himself, and what He does is just and good, however [unjust](#) and [evil](#) he is, about whom He takes His measures; and just as He was not unwilling to create him because He foresaw that he would be [evil](#); so in regard to the entire [human race](#), though not a man of it is born without the taint of [sin](#), He who is supremely good Himself is always working out good, making some men, as it were, "vessels of mercy," whom [grace](#) distinguishes from those who are "vessels of [wrath](#)," while He makes others, as it were, "vessels of [wrath](#)," that He may make [known](#) the riches of His [glory](#) towards the vessels of mercy. [Romans 9:23](#) Let, then, this objector go and contest the point against the apostle, whose words I use; nay, against the very Potter, whom the apostle forbids us answering again, in the well-[known](#) words: "Who are you, O man, that repliest against God! Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me like this? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto [honour](#), and another unto dishonour?" [Romans 9:20-21](#) Well now, will this man contend that the vessels of [wrath](#) are not under the dominion of the [devil](#)? or else, because they are under this dominion, are they made by another creator than He who makes the vessels of mercy? Or does He make them of other material, and not out of the self-same lump? Here, then, he may object, and say: "Therefore God makes these vessels for the [devil](#)." As if God [knew](#) not how to make such a use of even these for the furtherance of His own good and righteous works, as He makes of the very [devil](#) himself.

Chapter 32 [XVII.]—God Not the Author of the Evil in Those Whom He Creates.

Then, does God feed the children of perdition, the goats on His left hand, [Matthew 25:33](#) for the [devil](#) and nourish and clothe them for the [devil](#) "because He makes His sun to rise on the [evil](#) and the good, and sends rain upon the just and the [unjust](#)"? [Matthew 5:45](#) He creates, then, the [evil](#) just in the same way as He feeds and nourishes the [evil](#); because what He bestows on them by creating them appertains to the goodness of nature; and the growth which He gives them by food and nourishment, He bestows on them, of course, as a kindly help, not to their [evil](#) character, but to that same good nature which He in His goodness created. For in as far as they are human beings—this is a good of that nature whose author and maker is [God](#); but in as far as they are born with [sin](#) and so destined to perdition unless they are born again, they belong to the seed which was cursed from the beginning, [Wisdom 12:11](#) by the fault of the primitive disobedience. This fault, however, is turned to good account by the Maker of even the vessels of [wrath](#), that He may make [known](#) the riches of His [glory](#) on the vessels of mercy: [Romans 9:33](#) and that no one may attribute to any merits of his own, pertaining as he does to the self-same mass, his deliverance through [grace](#); but "he that [glories](#), let him [glory](#) in the Lord." [2 Corinthians 10:17](#)

Chapter 33 [XVIII.]—Though God Makes Us, We Perish Unless He Re-makes Us in Christ.

From this most [true](#) and firmly-established principle of the apostolic and catholic [faith](#) the writer before us departs in company with the [Pelagians](#). He will not have it that men are born under the dominion of the [devil](#), lest infants be carried to Christ to be delivered from the power of darkness, and to be translated into His kingdom. [Colossians 1:13](#) Thus he becomes the accuser of the [Church](#) which is spread over the world; into this Church everywhere infants, when to be [baptized](#), are first exorcised, for no other reason than that the prince of this world may be cast out [John 12:31](#) of them. For by him must they be necessarily possessed, as vessels of [wrath](#), since they are born of Adam, unless they be born again in [Christ](#), and transferred through [grace](#) as vessels of mercy into His kingdom. In his attack, however, upon this most firmly-established [truth](#), he would avoid the appearance of an assault upon the entire Church of [Christ](#). Accordingly, he limits his appeal to me alone, and in the tone of reproof and admonition he says: "But God made even you, though it must be confessed that a serious [error](#) has infected you." Well now, I thankfully acknowledge that God did make even me; and still I must have perished with the vessels of [wrath](#), if He had only made me of Adam, and had not re-made me in [Christ](#). Possessed, however, as this man is with the [heresy](#) of Pelagius, he does not [believe](#) this: if, indeed, he persists in so great an [error](#) to the very end, then not he, but catholics, will be able to see the character and extent of the [error](#) which has not simply infected, but absolutely destroyed him.

Chapter 34 [XIX.]—The Pelagians Argue that Cohabitation Rightly Used is a Good, and What is Born from It is Good.

I request your attention now to the following words. He says, "That children, however, who are conceived in wedlock are by nature good, we may learn from the apostle's words, when he speaks of men who, leaving the natural use of the [woman](#), burned in their [lust](#), men with men working together that which is disgraceful. [Romans 1:27](#) Here," says he, "the apostle shows the use of the [woman](#) to be both natural and, in its way, laudable; the abuse consisting in the exercise of one's own will in opposition to the decent use of the institution. Deservedly then," says he, "in those who make a right use thereof, concupiscence is commended in its kind and mode; while the excess of it, in which abandoned [persons](#) indulge, is punished. Indeed, at the very time when God punished the abuse in [Sodom](#) with His judgment of fire, He invigorated the generative powers of [Abraham](#) and Sarah, which had become impotent through old age. If, therefore," he goes on to say, "you think that fault must be found with the strength of the generative organs, because the Sodomites were steeped in [sin](#) thereby, you will have also to censure such [created](#) things as bread and wine, since [Holy Scripture](#) informs us that they [sinned](#) also in the abuse of these gifts. For the Lord, by the mouth of His [prophet](#) Ezekiel, says: 'These, moreover, were the [sins](#) of your sister [Sodom](#); in their [pride](#), she and her children overflowed in fulness of bread and abundance of wine; and they helped not the hand of the poor and needy.' [Ezekiel 16:49](#) Choose, therefore," says he, "which alternative you would rather have: either impute to the work of God the sexual connection of human bodies, or account such [created](#) things as bread and wine to be equally [evil](#). But if you

should prefer this latter conclusion, you prove yourself to be a Manichean. The [truth](#), however, is this: he who observes moderation in natural concupiscence uses a good thing well; but he who does not observe moderation, abuses a good thing. What means your statement, then," he asks, "when you say that 'the good of marriage is no more impeachable on account of the original [sin](#) which is derived herefrom, than the [evil](#) of [adultery](#) and fornication can be excused because of the natural good which is born of them'? In these words," says he, "you conceded what you had denied, and what you had conceded you nullified; and you aim at nothing so much as to be unintelligible. Show me any bodily marriage without sexual connection. Else impose some one name on this operation, and designate the conjugal union as either a good or an [evil](#). You answer, no [doubt](#), that you have already defined marriages to be good. Well then, if marriage is [good](#),—if the human being is the good fruit of marriage; if this fruit, being God's work, cannot be [evil](#), born as it is by good agency out of good,—where is the original [evil](#) which has been set aside by so many prior admissions?"

Chapter 35 [XX.]—He Answers the Arguments of Julianus. What is the Natural Use of the Woman? What is the Unnatural Use?

My answer to this challenge is, that not only the children of wedlock, but also those of [adultery](#), are a good work in so far as they are the work of [God](#), by whom they are created: but as concerns original [sin](#), they are all born under condemnation of the first Adam; not only those who are born in [adultery](#), but likewise such as are born in wedlock, unless they be regenerated in the second Adam, which is [Christ](#). As to what the apostle says of the [wicked](#), that "leaving the natural use of the [woman](#), the men burned in their [lust](#) one toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly;" [Romans 1:27](#) he did not speak of the conjugal use, but the "natural use," wishing us to understand how it comes to pass that by means of the members created for the purpose the two sexes can combine for generation. Thus it follows, that even when a man unites with a harlot to use these members, the use is a natural one. It is not, however, commendable, but rather culpable. But as regards any part of the body which is not meant for generative purposes, should a man use even his own wife in it, it is against nature and flagitious. Indeed, the same apostle had previously [Romans 9:26](#) said concerning [women](#): "Even their [women](#) did change the natural use into that which is against nature;" and then concerning men he added, that they worked that which is unseemly by leaving the natural use of the [woman](#). Therefore, by the phrase in question, "the natural use," it is not meant to praise conjugal connection; but thereby are denoted those flagitious deeds which are more unclean and criminal than even men's use of [women](#), which, even if unlawful, is nevertheless natural.

Chapter 36 [XXI.]—God Made Nature Good: the Saviour Restores It When Corrupted.

Now we do not reprehend bread and wine because some men are luxurious and drunkards, any more than we disapprove of gold because of the greedy and avaricious. Wherefore on the same principle we do not censure the [honourable](#) connection between husband and wife, because of the shame-causing [lust](#) of bodies. For the former would have been quite possible before any antecedent commission of [sin](#), and by it the united

pair would not have been made to blush; whereas the latter arose after the perpetration of [sin](#), and they were [obliged](#) to hide it, from very shame. [Genesis 3:7](#) Accordingly, in all united pairs ever since, however well and lawfully they have used this [evil](#), there has been a permanent necessity of avoiding the sight of man in any work of this kind, and thus acknowledging what caused inevitable shame, though a good thing would certainly [cause](#) no man to be ashamed. In this way we have two distinct facts insensibly introduced to our notice: the good of that laudable union of the sexes for the purpose of generating children; and the [evil](#) of that shameful [lust](#), in consequence of which the offspring must be regenerated in order to escape condemnation. The man, therefore, who, though with the [lust](#) which causes shame, joins in lawful cohabitation, turns an [evil](#) to good account; whereas he who joins in an unlawful cohabitation uses an [evil](#) badly; for that is more correctly called [evil](#) than good, at which both bad and good alike blush. We do better to [believe](#) him who has said, "I [know](#) that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing," [Romans 7:18](#) rather than him who calls that good, by which he is so conformed that he admits it to be [evil](#); but if he feels no shame, he adds the worse [evil](#) of impudence. Rightly then did we declare that "the good of marriage is no more impeachable because of the original [sin](#) which is derived therefrom, than the [evil](#) of [adultery](#) and fornication can be excused, because of the natural good which is born of them:" since the [human nature](#) which is born, whether of wedlock or of [adultery](#), is the work of [God](#). Now if this nature were an [evil](#), it ought not to have been born; if it had not [evil](#), it would not have to be regenerated: and (that I may combine the two cases in one and the same predicate) if [human nature](#) were an [evil](#) thing, it would not have to be saved; if it had not in it any [evil](#), it would not have to be saved. He, therefore, who contends that nature is not good, says that the Maker of the creature is not good; while he who will have it, that nature has no [evil](#) in it, deprives it in its corrupted condition of a merciful Saviour. From this, then, it follows, that in the birth of human beings neither fornication is to be excused on account of the good which is formed out of it by the good Creator, nor is marriage to be impeached by reason of the [evil](#) which has to be healed in it by the merciful Saviour.

Chapter 37 [XXII.]—If There is No Marriage Without Cohabitation, So There is No Cohabitation Without Shame.

"Show me," he says, "any bodily marriage without sexual connection." I do not show him any bodily marriage without sexual connection; but then, neither does he show me any case of sexual connection which is without shame. In paradise, however, if [sin](#) had not preceded, there would not have been, indeed, generation without union of the sexes, but this union would certainly have been without shame; for in the sexual union there would have been a quiet acquiescence of the members, not a [lust](#) of the flesh productive of shame. Matrimony, therefore, is a good, in which the human being is born after orderly conception; the fruit, too, of matrimony is [good](#), as being the very human being which is thus born; [sin](#), however, is an [evil](#) with which every man is born. Now it was God who made and still makes man; but "by one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all [sinned](#)." [Romans 5:12](#)

Chapter 38 [XXIII.]—Jovinian Used Formerly to Call Catholics Manicheans; The Arians Also Used to Call Catholics Sabellians.

"By your new mode of controversy," says he, "you both profess to be a catholic and patronize Manichæus, inasmuch as you designate matrimony both as a great good and a great [evil](#)." Now he is utterly [ignorant](#) of what he says, or pretends to be [ignorant](#). Or else he does not understand what we say, or does not wish it to be understood. But if he does not understand, he is impeded by the pre-occupation of [error](#); or if he does not wish our meaning to be understood, then obstinacy is the fault with which he defends his [error](#). Jovinian, too, who endeavoured a few years ago to found a new [heresy](#), used to declare that the catholics patronized the Manicheans, because in opposition to him they preferred [holy virginity](#) to marriage. But this man is sure to reply, that he does not agree with Jovinian in his indifference about marriage and [virginity](#). I do not myself say that this is their opinion; still these new [heretics](#) must allow, by the fact of Jovinian's playing off the Manicheans upon the catholics, that the expedient is not a novel one. We then declare that marriage is a good, not an [evil](#). But just as the [Arians](#) charge us with being Sabellians, although we do not say that the [Father](#), and the [Son](#), and the [Holy Ghost](#) are one and the same, as the Sabellians hold; but affirm that the [Father](#), and the [Son](#), and the [Holy Ghost](#) have one and the same nature, as the catholics [believe](#): so do the [Pelagians](#) cast the Manicheans in our teeth, although we do not declare marriage to be an [evil](#), as the Manicheans pretend, but affirm that [evil](#) accrued to the first man and [woman](#), that is to say, to the first married pair, and from them passed on to all [men](#), as the catholics hold. As, however, the [Arians](#), while avoiding the Sabellians, fall into worse company, because they have had the audacity to divide not the Persons of the Trinity, but the natures; so the [Pelagians](#), in their efforts to escape from the pestilent [error](#) of the Manicheans, by taking the opposite extreme, are convicted of entertaining worse sentiments than the Manicheans themselves touching the fruit of matrimony, inasmuch as they [believe](#) that infants stand in no need of Christ as their Physician.

Chapter 39 [XXIV.]—Man Born of Whatever Parentage is Sinful and Capable of Redemption.

He then says: "You conclude that a human being, if born of fornication, is not guilty; and if born in wedlock, is not innocent. Your assertion, therefore, amounts to this, that natural good may possibly subsist from adulterous connections, while original [sin](#) is actually derived from marriage." Well now, he here attempts, but in vain before an intelligent reader, to give a wrong turn to words which are correct enough. Far be it from us to say, that a human being, if born in fornication, is not guilty. But we do affirm, that a human being, whether he be born in wedlock or in fornication, is in some respect good, because of the Author of nature, [God](#); we add, however, that he derives some [evil](#) by reason of original [sin](#). Our statement, therefore, "that natural good can subsist even from adulterous parentage, but that original [sin](#) is derived even from marriage," does not amount to what he endeavours to make of it, that one born in [adultery](#) is not guilty, nor innocent when born in wedlock; but that one who is generated in either condition is guilty, because of original [sin](#); and that the offspring of either state may be freed by regeneration, because of the good of nature.

Chapter 40 [XXV.]—Augustin Declines the Dilemma Offered Him.

"One of these propositions," says he, "is [true](#), the other false." My reply is as brief as the allegation: Both are really [true](#), neither is false. "It is [true](#)," he goes on to say, "that the [sin](#) of [adultery](#) cannot be excused by reason of the man who is born of it; inasmuch as the [sin](#) which adulterers commit, pertains to corruption of the will; but the offspring which they produce tends to the praise of fecundity. If one were to sow wheat which had been stolen, the crop which springs up is none the worse. Of course," says he, "I blame the thief, but I praise the corn. So I pronounce him innocent who is born of the generous fruitfulness of the seed; even as the apostle puts it: 'God gives it a body, as it pleases Him; and to every seed its own body;' [1 Corinthians 15:38](#) but, at the same time, I condemn the flagitious man who has committed his adulterous [sin](#) in his perverse use of the divine appointment."

Chapter 41 [XXVI.]—The Pelagians Argue that Original Sin Cannot Come Through Marriage If Marriage is Good.

After this he proceeds with the following words: "Certainly if [evil](#) is contracted from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and you place under the [devil's](#) power its work and fruit, because everything which is the [cause](#) of [evil](#) is itself without good. The human being, however, who is born of wedlock owes his origin not to the reproaches of wedlock, but to its seminal elements: the [cause](#) of these, however, lies in the condition of bodies; and whosoever makes a bad use of these bodies, deals a blow at the good desert thereof, not at their nature. It is therefore clear," argues he, "that the good is not the [cause](#) of the [evil](#). If, therefore," he continues, "original [evil](#) is derived even from marriage, the [cause](#) of the [evil](#) is the compact of marriage; and that must needs be [evil](#) by which and from which the [evil](#) fruit has made its appearance; even as the Lord says in the [Gospel](#): 'A tree is [known](#) by its fruits.' [Matthew 7:16](#) How then," he asks, "do you think yourself worthy of attention, when you say that marriage is [good](#), and yet declare that nothing but [evil](#) proceeds from it? It is evident, then, that marriages are guilty, since original [sin](#) is deduced from them; and they are indefensible, too, unless their fruit be [proved](#) innocent. But they are defended, and pronounced good; therefore their fruit is [proved](#) to be innocent."

Chapter 42.—The Pelagians Try to Get Rid of Original Sin by Their Praise of God's Works; Marriage, in Its Nature and by Its Institution, is Not the Cause of Sin.

I have an answer ready for all this; but before I give it, I wish the reader carefully to notice, that the result of the opinions of these [persons](#) is, that no Saviour is necessary for infants, whom they deem to be entirely without any [sins](#) to be saved from. This vast perversion of the [truth](#), so hostile to God's great [grace](#), which is given through [our Lord Jesus Christ](#), who "came to seek and to save what was lost," [Luke 19:10](#) tries to insinuate its way into the hearts of the unintelligent by eulogizing the works of [God](#); that is, by its eulogy of [human nature](#), of human seed, of marriage, of sexual intercourse, of the fruits of matrimony—which are all of them [good](#) things. I will not say that he adds the praise of

[lust](#); because he too is ashamed even to name it, so that it is something else, and not *it*, which he seems to praise. By this method of his, not distinguishing between the [evils](#) which have accrued to nature and the goodness of nature's very self, he does not, indeed, show it to be sound (because that is untrue), but he does not permit its diseased condition to be healed. And, therefore, that first proposition of ours, to the effect that the good thing, even the human being, which is born of [adultery](#), does not excuse the [sin](#) of adulterous connection, he allows to be [true](#); and this point, which occasions no question to arise between us, he even defends and strengthens (as he well may) by his similitude of the thief who sows the seed which he stole, and out of which there arises a really good harvest. Our other proposition, however, that "the good of marriage cannot be blamed for the original [sin](#) which is derived from it," he will not admit to be [true](#); if, indeed, he assented to it, he would not be a Pelagian [heretic](#), but a catholic [Christian](#). "Certainly," says he, "if [evil](#) arises from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and you place its work and fruit under the [devil's](#) power, because everything which is the [cause](#) of [evil](#) is itself without good." And in addition to this, he contrived other arguments to show that good could not possibly be the [cause](#) of [evil](#); and from this he drew the inference, that marriage, which is a good, is not the [cause](#) of [evil](#); and that consequently from it no man could be born in a sinful state, and having need of a Saviour: just as if we said that marriage is the [cause](#) of [sin](#), though it is [true](#) that the human being which is born in wedlock is not born without [sin](#). Marriage was instituted not for the purpose of sinning, but of producing children. Accordingly the Lord's blessing on the married state ran thus: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." [Genesis 1:28](#) The [sin](#), however, which is derived to children from marriage does not belong to marriage, but to the [evil](#) which accrues to the human agents, from whose union marriage comes into [being](#). The [truth](#) is, both the [evil](#) of shameful [lust](#) can exist without marriage, and marriage might have been without it. It appertains, however, to the condition of the body (not of that life, but) of this death, that marriage cannot exist without it though it may exist without marriage. Of course that [lust](#) of the flesh which causes shame has [existence](#) out of the married state, whenever it urges men to the commission of [adultery](#), chambering and uncleanness, so utterly hostile to the purity of marriage; or again, when it does not commit any of these things, because the human agent gives no permission or assent to their commission, but still rises and is set in motion and creates disturbance, and (especially in dreams) effects the likeness of its own veritable work, and reaches the end of its own emotion. Well, now, this is an [evil](#) which is not even in the married state actually an [evil](#) of marriage; but it has this apparatus all ready in the body of this death, even against its own will, which is indispensable no [doubt](#) for the accomplishment of that which it does will. The [evil](#) in question, therefore, does not accrue to marriage from its own institution, which was blessed; but entirely from the circumstance that [sin](#) entered into the world by one man, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all [sinned](#). [Romans 5:12](#)

Chapter 43.—The Good Tree in the Gospel that Cannot Bring Forth Evil Fruit, Does Not Mean Marriage.

What, then, does he mean by saying, "A tree is [known](#) by its fruits," on the ground of our reading that the Lord spoke thus in the [Gospel](#)? Was, then, the Lord speaking of this question in these words, and not rather of men's two wills, the good and the [evil](#), calling

one of these the good tree, and the other the corrupt tree, inasmuch as good works spring out of a good will, and [evil](#) ones out of an [evil](#) will—the converse being impossible, good works out of an [evil](#) will, and [evil](#) ones out of a good will? If, however, we were to suppose marriage to be the good tree, according to the [Gospel](#) simile which he has mentioned, then, of course, we must on the other hand assume fornication to be the corrupt tree. Wherefore, if a human being is said to be the fruit of marriage, in the sense of the good fruit of a good tree, then undoubtedly a human being could never have been born in fornication. "For a corrupt tree brings not forth good fruit." [Matthew 7:18](#) Once more, if he were to say that not [adultery](#) must be supposed to occupy the place of the tree, but rather [human nature](#), of which man is born, then in this way not even marriage can stand for the tree, but only the [human nature](#) of which man is born. His simile, therefore, taken from the [Gospel](#) avails him nothing in elucidating this question, because marriage is not the [cause](#) of the [sin](#) which is transmitted in the natural birth, and atoned for in the new birth; but the [voluntary](#) transgression of the first man is the [cause](#) of original [sin](#). "You repeat," says he, "your allegation, 'Just as [sin](#), from whatever source it is derived to infants, is the work of the [devil](#), so man, howsoever he be born, is the work of [God](#).'" Yes, I said this, and most [truly](#) too; and if this man were not a Pelagian, but a catholic, he too would have nothing else to avow in the catholic [faith](#).

Chapter 44 [XXVII.]—The Pelagians Argue that If Sin Comes by Birth, All Married People Deserve Condemnation.

What, then, is his object when he inquires of us, "By what means [sin](#) may be found in an infant, through the will, or through marriage, or through its [parents](#)"? He speaks, indeed, in such a way as if he had an answer to all these questions, and as if by clearing all of [sin](#) together he would have nothing remain in the infant whence [sin](#) could be found. I beg your attention to his very words: "Through what," says he, "is [sin](#) found in an infant? Through the will? But there has never been one in him? Through marriage? But this appertains to the [parents'](#) work, of whom you had previously declared that in this action they had not [sinned](#); though it appears from your subsequent words that you did not make this concession [truly](#). Marriage, therefore," he says, "must be condemned, since it furnished the [cause](#) of the [evil](#). Yet marriage only indicates the work of personal agents. The [parents](#), therefore, who by their coming together afforded occasion for the [sin](#), are properly deserving of the condemnation. It does not then admit of [doubt](#)," says he, "any longer, if we are to follow your opinion, that married [persons](#) are handed over to [eternal](#) punishment, it being by their means brought about that the [devil](#) has come to exercise dominion over men. And what becomes of what you just before had said, that man was the work of God? Because if through their birth it happens that [evil](#) is in men, and through the [evil](#) that the [devil](#) has power over men, so in fact you declare the [devil](#) to be the author of [men](#), from whom comes their origin at birth. If, however, you [believe](#) that man is made by [God](#), and that husband and wife are innocent, see how impossible is your standpoint, that original [sin](#) is derived from them."

Chapter 45.—Answer to This Argument: The Apostle Says We All Sinned in One.

Now, there is an answer for him to all these questions given by the apostle, who censures neither the infant's will, which is not yet matured in him for sinning, nor marriage, which, as such, has not only its institution, but its blessing also, from [God](#); nor [parents](#), so far as they are [parents](#), who are united together properly and lawfully for the procreation of children; but he says, "By one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#) for in him all have [sinned](#)." [Romans 5:12](#) Now, if these [persons](#) would only receive this statement with catholic hearts and ears, they would not have rebellious feelings against the [grace](#) and [faith](#) of [Christ](#), nor would they vainly endeavour to convert to their own particular and [heretical](#) sense these very clear and manifest words of the apostle, when they assert that the purport of the passage is to this effect: that Adam was the first to [sin](#), and that any one who wished afterwards to commit [sin](#) found an example for sinning in him; so that [sin](#), you must [know](#), did not pass from this one upon all [men](#) by birth, but by the imitation of this one. Whereas it is certain that if the apostle meant this imitation to be here understood, he would have said that [sin](#) had entered into the world and passed upon all [men](#), not by one man, but rather by the [devil](#). For of the [devil](#) it is written: "They that are on his side do imitate him." [Wisdom 2:24](#) He used the phrase "by one man," from whom the generation of [men](#), of course, had its beginning, in order to show us that original [sin](#) had passed upon all [men](#) by generation.

Chapter 46.—The Reign of Death, What It Is; The Figure of the Future Adam; How All Men are Justified Through Christ.

But what else is meant even by the apostle's subsequent words? For after he had said the above, he added, "For until the law [sin](#) was in the world," [Romans 5:13](#) as much as to say that not even the law was able to take away [sin](#). "But [sin](#)," adds he, "was not imputed when there was no law." [Romans 5:13](#) It [existed](#) then, but was not imputed, for it was not set forth so that it might be imputed. It is on the same principle, indeed, that he says in another passage: "By the law is the [knowledge](#) of [sin](#)." [Romans 3:20](#) "Nevertheless," says he, "death reigned from Adam to [Moses](#);" [Romans 5:14](#) that is, as he had already expressed it, "until the law." Not that there was no [sin](#) after [Moses](#), but because even the law, which was given by [Moses](#), was unable to deprive death of its power, which, of course, reigns only by [sin](#). Its reign, too, is such as to plunge mortal man even into that second death which is to endure for evermore. "Death reigned," but over whom? "Even over them that had not [sinned](#) after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come." [Romans 5:14](#) Of whom that was to come, if not Christ? And in what sort a figure, except in the way of contrariety? which he elsewhere briefly expresses: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) The one condition was in one, even as the other condition was in the other; this is the figure. But this figure is not conformable in every respect; accordingly the apostle, following up the same idea, added, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the [grace](#) of [God](#), and the gift by [grace](#), which is by one man, [Jesus Christ](#), has abounded unto many." [Romans 5:15](#) But why "has it much more abounded," except it be that all who are

delivered through Christ suffer temporal death on Adam's account, but have everlasting life in store for the sake of Christ Himself? "And not as it was by one that [sinned](#)," says he, "so is the gift: for the judgment was from one to condemnation, but the free gift is from many offences unto justification." [Romans 5:15](#) "By one" what, but offence? since it is added, "the free gift is from many offences." Let these objectors tell us how it can be "by one offence unto condemnation," unless it be that even the one original [sin](#) which has passed over unto all [men](#) is sufficient for condemnation? Whereas the free gift delivers from many offences to justification, because it not only cancels the one offence, which is derived from the primal [sin](#), but all others also which are added in every individual man by the motion of his own will. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of [grace](#) and righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, by the offence of one upon all [men](#) to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one upon all [men](#) unto justification of life." [Romans 5:17-18](#) Let them after this persist in their vain imaginations, and maintain that one man did not hand on [sin](#) by propagation, but only set the example of committing it. How is it, then, that by one's offence judgment comes on all [men](#) to condemnation, and not rather by each man's own numerous [sins](#), unless it be that even if there were but that one [sin](#), it is sufficient, without the addition of any more, to lead to condemnation,—as, indeed, it does lead all who die in infancy who are born of Adam, without being born again in Christ? Why, then, does he, when he refuses to hear the apostle, ask us for an answer to his question, "By what means may [sin](#) be discovered in an infant,—through the will, or through marriage, or through its [parents](#)?" Let him listen in silence, and hear by what means [sin](#) may be discovered in an infant. "By the offence of one," says the apostle, "upon all [men](#) to condemnation." He said, moreover, all to condemnation through Adam, and all to justification through Christ: not, of course, that Christ removes to life all those who die in Adam; but he said "all" and "all," because, as without Adam no one goes to death, so without Christ no man to life. Just as we say of a teacher of letters, when he is alone in a town: This man teaches all their learning; not because all the inhabitants take lessons, but because no man who learns at all is taught by any but him. Indeed, the apostle afterwards designates as *many* those whom he had previously described as *all*, meaning the self-same [persons](#) by the two different terms. "For," says he, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the [obedience](#) of one shall many be made righteous." [Romans 5:19](#)

Chapter 47.—The Scriptures Repeatedly Teach Us that All Sin in One.

Still let him ply his question: "By what means may [sin](#) be discovered in an infant?" He may find an answer in the inspired pages: "By one man [sin](#) entered into the world, and death by [sin](#); and so death passed upon all [men](#), for in him all [sinned](#)." "Through the offence of one many are dead." "The judgment was from one to condemnation." "By one man's offence death reigned by one." "By the offence of one, Judgment came upon all [men](#) to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." [Romans 5:12-19](#) Behold, then, "by what means [sins](#) may be discovered in an infant." Let him now [believe](#) in original [sin](#); let him permit infants to come to [Christ](#), that they may be saved. [XXVIII.] What means this passage of his: "He [sins](#) not who is born; he [sins](#) not who begat him; He [sins](#) not who created him. Amidst these intrenchments of innocence,

therefore, what are the breaches through which you pretend that [sin](#) entered?" Why does he search for a hidden chink when he has an open door? "By one man," says the apostle; "through the offence of one," says the apostle; "By one man's disobedience," says the apostle. What does he want more? What does he require plainer? What does he expect to be more impressively repeated?

Chapter 48.—Original Sin Arose from Adam's Depraved Will. Whence the Corrupt Will Sprang.

"If," says he, "[sin](#) comes from the will, it is an [evil](#) will that causes [sin](#); if it comes from nature, then nature is [evil](#)." I at once answer, Sin does come from the will. Perhaps he wants to [know](#), whether original [sin](#) also? I answer, most certainly original [sin](#) also. Because it, too, was engendered from the [will](#) of the first man; so that it both [existed](#) in him, and passed on to all. As for what he next proposes, "If it comes from nature, then nature is [evil](#)," I request him to answer, if he can, to this effect: As it is manifest that all [evil](#) works spring from a corrupt will, like the fruits of a corrupt tree; so let him say whence arose the corrupt will itself—the corrupt tree which yields the corrupt fruits. If from an [angel](#), what was the [angel](#), but the good work of God? If from man, what was even he, but the good work of God? Nay, inasmuch as the corrupt will arose in the [angel](#) from an [angel](#), and in man from man, what were both these, previous to the [evil](#) arising within them, but the good work of [God](#), with a good and laudable nature? Behold, then, [evil](#) arises out of good; nor was there any other source, indeed, whence it could arise, but out of good. I call that will bad which no [evil](#) has preceded; no [evil](#) works, of course, since they only proceed from an [evil](#) will, as from a corrupt tree. Nevertheless, that the [evil](#) will arose out of good, could not be, because that good was made by the good [God](#), but because it was created out of nothing—not out of [God](#). What, therefore, becomes of his argument, "If nature is the work of [God](#), it will never do for the work of the [devil](#) to permeate the work of God"? Did not the work of the [devil](#), I ask, arise in a work of [God](#), when it first arose in that [angel](#) who became the [devil](#)? Well, then, if [evil](#), which was absolutely nowhere previously, could arise in a work of [God](#), why could not [evil](#), which had by this time found an [existence](#) somewhere, pervade the work of [God](#); especially when the apostle uses the very expression in the passage, "And so death passed upon all [men](#)"? [Romans 5:12](#) Can it be that men are not the work of God? Sin, therefore, has passed upon all [men](#)—in other words, the [devil's](#) work has penetrated the work of [God](#); or putting the same meaning in another shape, The work done by a work of God has pervaded God's work. And this is the reason why God alone has an unchangeable and almighty goodness: even before any [evil](#) came into [existence](#) He made all things good; and out of all the [evils](#) which have arisen in the [good](#) things which He has made, He works through all for good.

Chapter 49 [XXIX.]—In Infants Nature is of God, and the Corruption of Nature of the Devil.

"In a single man rightly is the intention blamed and the origin praised; because there must be two things to admit of contraries: in an infant, however, there is but one thing, nature only; because will has no [existence](#) in his case. Now this one thing," says he, "is

ascribable either to God or to the [devil](#). If nature," he goes on to observe, "is of [God](#), there cannot be original [evil](#) in it. If of the [devil](#), there will be nothing on the ground of which man may be vindicated for the work of [God](#). So that he is completely a Manichean who maintains original [sin](#)." Let him hear rather what is [true](#) in opposition to all this. In a single man the will is to be blamed, and his nature to be praised; because there should be two things for the application of contraries. Still, even in an infant, it is not the case that there is but one thing only, that is, the nature in which man was created by the good [God](#); for he has also that corruption, which has passed upon all [men](#) by one, as the apostle wisely says, and not as the folly of Pelagius, or Cœlestius, or any of their [disciples](#) would represent the matter. Of these two things, then, which we have said exist in an infant, one is ascribed to [God](#), the other to the [devil](#). From the fact, however, that (owing to one of the two, even the corruption) both are subjected to the power of the [devil](#), there really ensues no incongruity; because this happens not from the power of the [devil](#) himself, but of [God](#). In fact, corruption is subjected to corruption, nature to nature, because the two are even in the [devil](#); so that whenever those who are beloved and elect are "delivered from the power of darkness" [Colossians 1:13](#) to which they are [justly](#) exposed, it is clear enough how great a gift is bestowed on the justified and good by the good [God](#), who brings good even out of [evil](#).

Chapter 50.—The Rise and Origin of Evil. The Exorcism and Exsufflation of Infants, a Primitive Christian Rite.

As to the passage, which he seemed to himself to indite in a [pious](#) vein, as it were, "If nature is of [God](#), there cannot be original [sin](#) in it," would not another person seem even to him to give a still more [pious](#) turn to it, thus: "If nature is of [God](#), there cannot arise any [sin](#) in it?" And yet this is not [true](#). The Manicheans, indeed, meant to assert this, and they endeavoured to steep in all sorts of [evil](#) the very nature of God itself, and not His creature, made out of nothing. For [evil](#) arose in nothing else than what was [good](#)—not, however, the supreme and unchangeable good which is God's nature, but that which was made out of nothing by the wisdom of [God](#). This, then, is the reason why man is claimed for a divine work; for he would not be man unless he were made by the operation of [God](#). But [evil](#) would not exist in infants, if [evil](#) had not been committed by the wilfulness of the first man, and original [sin](#) derived from a nature thus corrupted. It is not [true](#), then, as he puts it, "He is completely a Manichean who maintains original [sin](#);" but rather, he is completely a Pelagian who does not [believe](#) in original [sin](#). For it is not simply from the time when the pestilent opinions of Manichæus began to grow that in the Church of God infants about to be [baptized](#) were for the first time exorcised with exsufflation,—which ceremonial was intended to show that they were not removed into the kingdom of Christ without first being delivered from the power of darkness; [Colossians 1:13](#) nor is it in the books of Manichæus that we read how "the [Son of man](#) come to seek and to save that which was lost," [Luke 19:10](#) or how "by one man [sin](#) entered into the world," [Romans 5:12](#) with those other similar passages which we have quoted above; or how God "visits the [sins](#) of the fathers upon the children;" [Exodus 20:5](#) or how it is written in the Psalm, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in [sin](#) did my mother conceive me;" or again, how "man was made like vanity: his days pass away like a shadow;" or again, "behold, You have made my days old, and my [existence](#) as nothing before You; nay, every man living

is altogether vanity;" or how the apostle says, "every creature was made subject to vanity;" [Romans 8:20](#) or how it is written in the book of Ecclesiastes, "vanity of vanities; all is vanity: what profit has a man of all his labour which he takes under the sun?" [Ecclesiastes 1:2-3](#) and in the book of Ecclesiasticus, "a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam from the day that they go out of their mother's womb to the day that they return to the mother of all things;" [Sirach 40:1](#) or how again the apostle writes, "in Adam all die;" [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) or how [holy](#) Job says, when speaking about his own [sins](#), "for man that is born of a [woman](#) is short-lived and full of [wrath](#): as the flower of grass, so does he fall; and he departs like a shadow, nor shall he stay. Have You not taken account even of him, and caused him to enter into judgment in Your sight? For who shall be pure from uncleanness? Not even one, even if his life should be but of one day upon the earth." [Job 14:1-5](#) Now when he speaks of *uncleanness* here, the mere perusal of the passage is enough to show that he meant [sin](#) to be understood. It is plain from the words, of what he is speaking. The same phrase and sense occur in the [prophet](#) Zechariah, in the place where "the filthy garments" are removed from off the [high priest](#), and it is said to him, "I have taken away your [sins](#)." [Zechariah 3:4](#) Well now, I rather think that all these passages, and others of like import, which point to the fact that man is born in [sin](#) and under the curse, are not to be read among the dark recesses of the Manicheans, but in the sunshine of catholic [truth](#).

Chapter 51.—To Call Those that Teach Original Sin Manicheans is to Accuse Ambrose, Cyprian, and the Whole Church.

What, moreover, shall I say of those commentators on the [divine Scriptures](#) who have flourished in the catholic Church? They have never tried to pervert these testimonies to an alien sense, because they were firmly established in our most ancient and solid [faith](#), and were never moved aside by the novelty of [error](#). Were I to wish to collect these together, and to make use of their testimony, the task would both be too long, and I should probably seem to have bestowed less preference than I ought on canonical authorities, from which one must never deviate. I will merely mention the most blessed Ambrose, to whom (as I have already observed) Pelagius accorded so signal a testimony of his integrity in the [faith](#). This Ambrose, however, maintained that there was nothing else in infants, which required the healing [grace](#) of [Christ](#), than original [sin](#). But in respect of Cyprian, with his all-[glorious](#) crown, will any one say of him, that he either was, or ever could by any possibility have been, a Manichean, when he suffered before the pestilent [heresy](#) had made its appearance in the Roman world? And yet, in his book on the [baptism](#) of infants, he so vigorously maintains original [sin](#) as to declare, that even before the eighth day, if necessary, the infant ought to be [baptized](#), lest his [soul](#) should be lost; and he wished it to be understood, that the infant could the more readily attain to the indulgence of [baptism](#), inasmuch as it is not so much his own [sins](#), but the [sins](#) of another, which are remitted to him. Well, then, let this writer dare to call these Manicheans; let him, moreover, under this scandalous imputation asperse that most ancient tradition of the [Church](#), whereby infants are, as I have said, exorcised with exsufflation, for the purpose of being translated into the kingdom of [Christ](#), after they are delivered from the power of darkness—that is to say, of the [devil](#) and his [angels](#). As for ourselves, indeed, we are more ready to be associated with these men, and with the Church of [Christ](#), so

firmly rooted in this ancient [faith](#), in suffering any amount of curse and contumely, than with the [Pelagians](#), to be covered with the flattery of public praise.

Chapter 52 [XXX.]—Sin Was the Origin of All Shameful Concupiscence.

"Do you," he asks, "repeat your affirmation, 'There would be no concupiscence if man had not first [sinned](#); marriage, however, would have [existed](#), even if no one had [sinned](#)'?" I never said, "There would be no concupiscence," because there is a concupiscence of the spirit, which craves wisdom. [Wisdom 6:21](#) My words were, "There would be no *shameful* concupiscence." Let my words be re-perused, even those which he has cited, that it may be clearly seen how dishonestly they are handled by him. However, let him call it by any name he likes. What I said would not have [existed](#) unless man had previously [sinned](#), was that which made them ashamed in paradise when they covered their loins, and which every one will allow would not have been felt, had not the [sin](#) of disobedience first occurred. Now he who wishes to understand what they felt, ought to consider what it was they covered. For of the fig-leaves they made themselves "aprons," not clothes; and these aprons or kilts are called *περιζώματα* in Greek. Now all [know](#) well enough what it is which these *peri-zomata* cover, which some Latin writers explain by the word *campestris*. Who is [ignorant](#) of what [persons](#) wore this kilt, and what parts of the body such a dress concealed; even the same which the Roman youths used to cover when they practised naked in the *campus*, from which circumstance the name *campester* was given to the apron.

Chapter 53 [XXXI.]—Concupiscence Need Not Have Been Necessary for Fruitfulness.

He says: "Therefore that marriage which might have been without concupiscence, without bodily motion, without necessity for sexual organs—to use your own statement—is pronounced by you to be laudable; whereas such marriages as are now enacted are, according to your decision, the invention of the [devil](#). Those, therefore, whose institution was possible in your dreams, you deliberately assert to be good, while those which [Holy Scripture](#) intends, when it says, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh,' [Genesis 2:24](#) you pronounce to be diabolical [evils](#), worthy, in short, to be called a pest, not matrimony." It is not to be wondered at, that these Pelagian opponents of mine try to twist my words to any meaning they wish them to bear, when it has been their custom to do the same thing with the [Holy Scriptures](#), and not simply in obscure passages, but where their testimony is clear and plain: a custom, indeed, which is followed by all other [heretics](#). Now who could make such an assertion, as that it was possible for marriages to be "without bodily motion, without necessity for sexual organs"? For God made the sexes; because, as it is written, "He created them male and female." [Genesis 1:27](#) But how could it possibly happen, that they who were to be united together, and by the very union were to beget children, were not to move their bodies, when, of course, there can be no bodily contact of one person with another if bodily motion be not resorted to? The question before us, then, is not about the motion of bodies, without which there could not

be sexual intercourse; but about the shameful motion of the organs of generation, which certainly could be absent, and yet the fructifying connection be still not wanting, if the organs of generation were not [obedient](#) to [lust](#), but simply to the will, like the other members of the body. Is it not even now the case, in "the body of this death," that a command is given to the foot, the arm, the finger, the lip, or the tongue, and they are instantly set in motion at this intimation of our will? And (to take a still more wonderful case) even the liquid contained in the urinary vessels obeys the command to flow from us at our pleasure, and when we are not pressed with its overflow; while the vessels, also, which contain the liquid, discharge without difficulty, if they are in a healthy state, the office assigned them by our will of propelling, pressing out, and ejecting their contents. With how much greater ease and quietness, then, if the generative organs of our body were compliant, would natural motion ensue, and human conception be effected; except in the instance of those [persons](#) who violate natural order, and by a righteous retribution are punished with the intractability of these members and organs! This punishment is felt by the chaste and pure, who, without [doubt](#), would rather beget children by mere natural desire than by voluptuous pruriency; while unchaste [persons](#), who are impelled by this diseased passion, and bestow their [love](#) upon harlots as well as wives, are excited by a still heavier mental remorse in consequence of this carnal chastisement.

Chapter 54 [XXXII.]—How Marriage is Now Different Since the Existence of Sin.

God forbid that we should say, what this man pretends we say, "Such marriages as are now enacted are the invention of the [devil](#)." Why, they are absolutely the same marriages as God made at the very first. For this blessing of His, which He appointed for the procreation of [mankind](#), He has not taken away even from men under condemnation, any more than He has deprived them of their senses and bodily limbs, which are no [doubt](#) His gifts, although they are condemned to die by an already incurred retribution. This, I say, is the marriage whereof it was said (only excepting the great sacrament of Christ and the [Church](#), which the institution prefigured): "For this [cause](#) shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." [Genesis 2:24](#) For this, no [doubt](#), was said before [sin](#); and if no one had [sinned](#), it might have been done without shameful [lust](#). And now, although it is not done without that, in the body of this death, there is that nevertheless which does not cease to be done so that a man may cleave to his wife, and they twain be one flesh. When, therefore, it is alleged that marriage is now one thing, but might have been another had no one [sinned](#), this is not predicated of its nature, but of a certain quality which has undergone a change for the worse. Just as a man is said to be different, though he is actually the same individual, when he has changed his manner of life either for the better or the worse; for as a righteous man he is one thing, and as a sinful man another, though the man himself be really the same individual. In like manner, marriage without shameful [lust](#) is one thing, and marriage with shameful [lust](#) is another. When, however, a [woman](#) is lawfully united to her husband in accordance with the [true](#) constitution of wedlock, and fidelity to what is due to the flesh is kept free from the [sin](#) of [adultery](#), and so children are lawfully begotten, it is actually the very same marriage which God instituted at first, although by his primeval inducement to [sin](#), the [devil](#) inflicted a heavy wound, not, indeed, on

marriage itself, but on man and [woman](#) by whom marriage is made, by his prevailing on them to disobey [God](#),—a [sin](#) which is required in the course of the divine judgment by the reciprocal disobedience of [man's](#) own members. United in this matrimonial state, although they were ashamed of their nakedness, still they were not by any means able altogether to lose the blessedness of marriage which God appointed.

Chapter 55 [XXXIII.]—Lust is a Disease; The Word "Passion" In the Ecclesiastical Sense.

He then passes on from those who are united in marriage to those who are born of it. It is in relation to these that we have to encounter the most laborious discussions with the new [heretics](#) in connection with our subject. Impelled by some hidden instinct from [God](#), he makes avowals which go far to untie the whole knot. For in his desire to raise greater odium against us, because we had said that infants are born in [sin](#) even of lawful wedlock, he makes the following observation: "You assert that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might possibly have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world, and for whom Christ died, you decide to be the work of the [devil](#), born in a disordered state, and guilty from the beginning. Therefore," he continues, "I have shown that you are doing nothing else than denying that God is the Creator of the men who actually exist." I beg to say, that I declare none but God to be the Creator of all [men](#), however [true](#) it be that all are born in [sin](#), and must perish unless born again. It was, indeed, the sinful corruption which had been sown in them by the [devil's](#) persuasion that became the means of their being born in [sin](#); not the created nature of which men are composed. Shameful [lust](#), however, could not excite our members, except at our own will, if it were not a disease. Nor would even the lawful and [honourable](#) cohabiting of husband and wife raise a blush, with avoidance of any eye and desire of secrecy, if there were not a diseased condition about it. Moreover, the apostle would not prohibit the possession of wives in this disease, did not disease exist in it. The phrase in the Greek text, ἔν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας, is by some rendered in Latin, *in morbo desiderii vel concupiscentiæ*, in the disease of desire or of concupiscence; by others, however, *in passione concupiscentiæ*, in the passion of concupiscence; or however it is found otherwise in different copies: at any rate, the Latin equivalent *passio* (passion), especially in the ecclesiastical use, is usually understood as a term of censure.

Chapter 56.—The Pelagians Allow that Christ Died Even for Infants; Julianus Slays Himself with His Own Sword.

But whatever opinion he may entertain about the shame-causing concupiscence of the flesh, I must request your attention to what he has said respecting infants (and it is in their behalf that we labour), as to their being supposed to need a Saviour, if they are not to die without [salvation](#). I repeat his words once more: "You assert," says he to me, "that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might possibly have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world, *and for whom Christ died*, you decide to be the work of the [devil](#), born in a disordered state, and guilty from the very beginning." Would that he only solved the entire controversy as he unties the knot of this question! For will he pretend to say that he merely spoke of adults in this passage? Why, the subject in hand is about

infants, about human beings at their birth; and it is about these that he raises odium against us, because they are defined by us as guilty from the very first, because we declare them to be guilty, since Christ died for them. And why did Christ die for them if they are not guilty? It is entirely from them, yes, from them, we shall find the reason, wherefore he thought odium should be raised against me. He asks: "How are infants guilty, for whom Christ died?" We answer: Nay, how are infants not guilty, since Christ died for them? This dispute wants a judge to determine it. Let Christ be the Judge, and let Him tell us what is the object which has profited by His death? "This is my blood," He says, "which shall be shed for many for the remission of [sins](#)." [Matthew 26:28](#) Let the apostle, too, be His assessor in the judgment; since even in the apostle it is Christ Himself that speaks. Speaking of [God](#) the [Father](#), he exclaims: "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all!" [Romans 8:32](#) I suppose that he describes Christ as so delivered up for us all, that infants in this matter are not separated from ourselves. But what need is there to dwell on this point, out of which even he no longer raises a contest? For the [truth](#) is, he not only confesses that Christ died even for infants, but he also reproves us out of this admission, because we say that these same infants are guilty for whom Christ died. Now, then, let the apostle, who says that Christ was delivered up for us all, also tell us why Christ was delivered up for us. "He was delivered," says he, "for our offences, and rose again for our justification." [Romans 4:25](#) If, therefore, as even this man both confesses and professes, both admits and objects, infants, too, are included amongst those for whom Christ was delivered up; and if it was for our [sins](#) that Christ was delivered up, even infants, of course, must have original [sins](#), for whom Christ was delivered up; He must have something in them to heal, who (as Himself affirms) is not needed as a Physician by the whole, but by the sick; [Matthew 9:12](#) He must have a reason for saving them, seeing that He came into the world, as the [Apostle Paul](#) says, "to save sinners;" [1 Timothy 1:15](#) He must have something in them to remit, who testifies that He shed His blood "for the remission of [sins](#);" [Matthew 26:28](#) He must have good reason for seeking them out, who "came," as He says, "to seek and to save that which was lost;" [Luke 19:10](#) the [Son of man](#) must find in them something to destroy, who came for the express purpose, as the Apostle John says, "that He might destroy the works of the [devil](#)." [1 John 3:8](#) Now to this [salvation](#) of infants He must be an enemy, who asserts their innocence, in such a way as to deny them the medicine which is required by the hurt and wounded.

Chapter 57 [XXXIV.]—The Great Sin of the First Man.

Now observe what follows, as he goes on to say: "If, before [sin](#), God created a source from which men should be born, but the [devil](#) a source from which [parents](#) were disturbed, then beyond a [doubt holiness](#) must be ascribed to those that are born, and guilt to those that produce. Since, however, this would be a most manifest condemnation of marriage; remove, I [pray](#) you, this view from the midst of the churches, and really [believe](#) that all things were made by [Jesus Christ](#), and that without Him nothing was made." [John 1:3](#) He so speaks here, as if he would make us say, that there is a something in man's substance which was created by the [devil](#). The [devil](#) persuaded [evil](#) as a [sin](#); he did not create it as a nature. No [doubt](#) he persuaded nature for man is nature; and therefore by his persuasion he corrupted it. He who wounds a limb does not, of course, create it, but he

injures it. Those wounds, indeed, which are inflicted on the body produce lameness in a limb, or difficulty of motion; but they do not affect the [virtue](#) whereby a man becomes righteous: that wound, however, which has the name of [sin](#), wounds the very life, which was being righteously lived. This wound was at that fatal moment of the fall inflicted by the [devil](#) to a vastly wider and deeper extent than are the [sins](#) which are [known](#) amongst men. Whence it came to pass, that our nature having then and there been deteriorated by that great [sin](#) of the first man, not only was made a sinner, but also generates sinners; and yet the very weakness, under which the [virtue](#) of a [holy](#) life has drooped and died, is not really nature, but corruption; precisely as a bad state of health is not a bodily substance or nature, but disorder; very often, indeed, if not always, the ailing character of [parents](#) is in a certain way implanted, and reappears in the bodies of their children.

Chapter 58.—Adam's Sin is Derived from Him to Every One Who is Born Even of Regenerate Parents; The Example of the Olive Tree and the Wild Olive.

But this [sin](#), which changed man for the worse in paradise, because it is far greater than we can form any judgment of, is contracted by every one at his birth, and is remitted only in the regenerate; and this derangement is such as to be derived even from [parents](#) who have been regenerated, and in whom the [sin](#) is remitted and covered, to the condemnation of the children born of them, unless these, who were bound by their first and carnal birth, are absolved by their second and spiritual birth. Of this wonderful fact the Creator has produced a wonderful example in the cases of the olive and the wild olive trees, in which, from the seed not only of the wild olive, but even of the good olive, nothing but a wild olive springs. Wherefore, although even in [persons](#) whose natural birth is followed by regeneration through [grace](#), there exists this carnal concupiscence which contends against the law of the [mind](#), yet, seeing that it is remitted in the remission of [sins](#), it is no longer accounted to them as [sin](#), nor is it in any degree hurtful, unless consent is yielded to its motions for unlawful deeds. Their offspring, however, being begotten not of spiritual concupiscence, but of carnal, like a wild olive of our race from the good olive, derives guilt from them by natural birth to such a degree that it cannot be liberated from that pest except by being born again. How is it, then, that this man affirms that we ascribe [holiness](#) to those who are born, and guilt to their [parents](#)? when the [truth](#) rather shows that even if there has been [holiness](#) in the [parents](#), original [sin](#) is inherent in their children, which is abolished in them only if they are born again.

Chapter 59 [XXXV.]—The Pelagians Can Hardly Venture to Place Concupiscence in Paradise Before the Commission of Sin.

This being the case, let him think what he pleases about this concupiscence of the flesh and about the [lust](#) which lords it over the unchaste, has to be mastered by the chaste, and yet is to be blushed at both by the chaste and the unchaste; for I see plainly he is much pleased with it. Let him not hesitate to praise what he is ashamed to name; let him call it (as he has in fact called it) the vigour of the members, and let him not be afraid of the [honor](#) of chaste ears; let him designate it the power of the members, and let him not care about the impudence. Let him say, if his blushes permit him, that if no one had [sinned](#),

this vigour must have flourished like a flower in paradise; nor would there have been any need to cover that which would have been so moved that no one should have felt ashamed; rather, with a wife provided, it would have been ever exercised and never repressed, lest so great a pleasure should ever be denied to so vast a [happiness](#). Far be it from being thought that such blessedness could in such a spot fail to have what it wished, or ever experience in mind or body what it disliked. And so, should the motion of [lust](#) precede men's will, then the will would immediately follow it. The wife, who ought certainly never to be absent in this [happy](#) state of things, would be urged on by it, whether about to conceive or already pregnant; and, either a child would be begotten, or a natural and laudable pleasure would be gratified,—for perish all seed rather than disappoint the appetite of so good a concupiscence. Only be sure that the united pair do not apply themselves to that use of each other which is contrary to nature, then (with so modest a reservation) let them use, as often as they would have delight, their organs of generation, created for the purpose. But what if this very use, which is contrary to nature, should peradventure give them delight; what if the aforesaid laudable [lust](#) should hanker even after such delight; I wonder whether they should pursue it because it was sweet, or loathe it because it was base? If they should pursue it to gratification, what becomes of all thought about [honour](#)? If they should loathe it, where is the peaceful composure of so good a [happiness](#)? But at this point perchance his blushes will awake, and he will say that so great is the tranquillity of this [happy](#) state, and so entire the orderliness which may have [existed](#) in this state of things, that carnal concupiscence never preceded these [persons'](#) will: only whenever they themselves wished, would it then arise; and only then would they entertain the wish, when there was need for begetting children; and the result would be, that no seed would ever be emitted to no purpose, nor would any embrace ever ensue which would not be followed by conception and birth; the flesh would [obey](#) the will, and concupiscence would vie with it in subserviency. Well, if he says all this of the imagined [happy](#) state, he must at least be pretty sure that what he describes does not now exist among [men](#). And even if he will not concede that [lust](#) is a corrupt condition, let him at least allow that through the disobedience of the man and [woman](#) in the [happy](#) state the very concupiscence of their flesh was corrupted, so that what would once be excited obediently and orderly is now moved disobediently and inordinately, and that to such a degree that it is not [obedient](#) to the [will](#) of even chaste-minded husbands and wives, so that it is excited when it is not wanted; and whenever it is necessary, it never, indeed, follows their will, but sometimes too hurriedly, at other times too tardily, exerts its own movements. Such, then, is the rebellion of this concupiscence which the primitive pair received for their own disobedience, and transfused by natural descent to us. It certainly was not at their bidding, but in utter disorder, that it was excited, when they covered their members, which at first were worthy to be gloried in, but had then become a ground of shame.

Chapter 60.—Let Not the Pelagians Indulge Themselves in a Cruel Defence of Infants.

As I said, however, let him entertain what views he likes of this [lust](#); let him proclaim it as he pleases, praise it as much as he chooses (and he pleases *much*, as several of his extracts show), that the [Pelagians](#) may gratify themselves, if not with its uses, at all

events with its praises, as many of them as fail to enjoy the limitation of continence enjoined in wedlock. Only let him spare the infants, so as not to praise their condition uselessly, and defend them cruelly. Let him not declare them to be safe; let him suffer them to come, not, indeed, to Pelagius for eulogy, but to Christ for [salvation](#). For, that this book may be now brought to a termination, since the dissertation of this man is ended, which was written on the short paper you sent me, I will close with his last words: "Really [believe](#) that all things were made by [Jesus Christ](#), and that without Him nothing was made." [John 1:3](#) Let him grant that Jesus is Jesus even to infants; and as he confesses that all things were made by Him, in that He is [God the Word](#), so let him acknowledge that infants, too, are saved by Him in that He is Jesus; let him, I say, do this if he would be a catholic [Christian](#). For thus it is written in the [Gospel](#): "And they shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their [sins](#)" [Matthew 1:21](#) —Jesus, because Jesus is in Latin *Salvator*, "Saviour." He shall, indeed, save His people; and amongst His people surely there are infants. "From their [sins](#)" shall He save them; in infants, too, therefore, are there original [sins](#), on account of which He can be Jesus, that is, Saviour, even unto them.