

Third Order Readings for October 8, 2017

Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1

[1] In the first book, O The-oph'ilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, [2] until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. [3] To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. [4] And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, [5] for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." [6] So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" [7] He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. [8] But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Sama'ria and to the end of the earth." [9] And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." [12] Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away; [13] and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. [14] All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. [15] In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, [16] "Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. [17] For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry. [18] (Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. [19] And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akel'dama, that is, Field of Blood.) [20] For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it'; and 'His office let another take.' [21] So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, [22] beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us -- one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." [23] And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsab'bas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthi'as. [24] And they prayed and said, "Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen [25] to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place." [26] And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthi'as; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.

Acts.2

[1] When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. [5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. [7] And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [9] Par'thians and Medes and E'lamites and residents of Mesopota'mia, Judea and Cappado'cia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phryg'ia and Pamphyl'ia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyre'ne, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, [11] Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." [12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" [13] But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." [14] But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. [15] For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; [16] but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: [17] `And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; [18] yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. [19] And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; [20] the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. [21] And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' [22] "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know -- [23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. [24] But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. [25] For David says concerning him, `I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; [26] therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. [27] For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption. [28] Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.' [29] "Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30] Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, [31] he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. [32] This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. [33] Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. [34] For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, `The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, [35] till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.' [36] Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made

him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." [37] Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" [38] And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." [40] And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." [41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. [42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common; [45] and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts.3

[1] Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. [2] And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple. [3] Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. [4] And Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "Look at us." [5] And he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them. [6] But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." [7] And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. [8] And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. [9] And all the people saw him walking and praising God, [10] and recognized him as the one who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. [11] While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's, astounded. [12] And when Peter saw it he addressed the people, "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? [13] The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. [14] But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, [15] and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. [16] And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. [17] "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. [18] But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. [19] Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, [20] and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, [21] whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. [22] Moses said, `The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

[23] And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' [24] And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterwards, also proclaimed these days. [25] You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God gave to your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' [26] God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Acts.4

[1] And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sad'ducees came upon them, [2] annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. [3] And they arrested them and put them in custody until the morrow, for it was already evening. [4] But many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand. [5] On the morrow their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, [6] with Annas the high priest and Ca'iaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. [7] And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" [8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, [9] if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a cripple, by what means this man has been healed, [10] be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. [11] This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. [12] And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [13] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. [14] But seeing the man that had been healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. [15] But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred with one another, [16] saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. [17] But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any one in this name." [18] So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. [19] But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; [20] for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." [21] And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people; for all men praised God for what had happened. [22] For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. [23] When they were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. [24] And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, [25] who by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, didst say by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? [26] The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' -- [27] for truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and

Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had predestined to take place. [29] And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, [30] while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus."

[31] And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

[32] Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.

[33] And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. [34] There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold

[35] and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need.

[36] Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, [37] sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

The Confessions

Book VIII, in full

1. O My God, let me with gratitude remember and confess unto You Your mercies bestowed upon me. Let my bones be steeped in Your love, and let them say, Who is like You, O Lord? You have loosed my bonds, I will offer unto You the sacrifice of thanksgiving. And how You have loosed them I will declare; and all who worship You when they hear these things shall say: Blessed be the Lord in heaven and earth, great and wonderful is His name. Your words had stuck fast into my breast, and I was hedged round about by You on every side. Of Your eternal life I was now certain, although I had seen it through a glass darkly. Yet I no longer doubted that there was an incorruptible substance, from which was derived all other substance; nor did I now desire to be more certain of You, but more steadfast in You. As for my temporal life, all things were uncertain, and my heart had to be purged from the old leaven. The Way, the Savior Himself, was pleasant unto me, but as yet I disliked to pass through its straightness. And Thou put into my mind, and it seemed good in my eyes, to go unto Simplicianus, who appeared to me a faithful servant of Yours, and Your grace shone in him. I had also heard that from his very youth he had lived most devoted to You. Now he had grown into years, and by reason of so great age, passed in such zealous following of Your ways, he appeared to me likely to have gained much experience; and so in truth he had. Out of which experience I desired him to tell me (setting before him my griefs) which would be the most fitting way for one afflicted as I was to walk in Your way.

2. For the Church I saw to be full, and one went this way, and another that. But it was displeasing to me that I led a secular life; yea, now that my passions had ceased to excite me as of old with hopes of honor and wealth, a very grievous burden it was to undergo so great a servitude. For, compared with Your sweetness, and the beauty of Your house, which I loved, those things delighted me no longer. But still very tenaciously was I held by the love of women; nor did the apostle forbid me to marry, although he exhorted me to something better, especially wishing that

all men were as he himself was. But I, being weak, made choice of the more agreeable place, and because of this alone was tossed up and down in all beside, faint and languishing with withering cares, because in other matters I was compelled, though unwilling, to agree to a married life, to which I was given up and enthralled. I had heard from the mouth of truth that there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but, says He, he that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Vain, assuredly, are all men in whom the knowledge of God is not, and who could not, out of the good things which are seen, find out Him who is good. But I was no longer in that vanity; I had surmounted it, and by the united testimony of Your whole creation had found You, our Creator, and Your Word, God with You, and together with You and the Holy Ghost one God, by whom You created all things. There is yet another kind of impious men, who when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. Into this also had I fallen; but Your right hand held me up, and bore me away, and You placed me where I might recover. For You have said unto man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and desire not to seem wise, because, Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. But I had now found the goodly pearl, which, selling all that I had, I ought to have bought; and I hesitated.

3. To Simplicianus then I went—the father of Ambrose (at that time a bishop) in receiving Your grace, and whom he truly loved as a father. To him I narrated the windings of my error. But when I mentioned to him that I had read certain books of the Platonists, which Victorinus, sometime Professor of Rhetoric at Rome (who died a Christian, as I had been told), had translated into Latin, he congratulated me that I had not fallen upon the writings of other philosophers, which were full of fallacies and deceit, after the rudiments of the world, whereas they, in many ways, led to the belief in God and His word. Then, to exhort me to the humility of Christ, hidden from the wise, and revealed to little ones, he spoke of Victorinus himself, whom, while he was at Rome, he had known very intimately; and of him he related that about which I will not be silent. For it contains great praise of Your grace, which ought to be confessed unto You, how that most learned old man, highly skilled in all the liberal sciences, who had read, criticized, and explained so many works of the philosophers; the teacher of so many noble senators; who also, as a mark of his excellent discharge of his duties, had (which men of this world esteem a great honor) both merited and obtained a statue in the Roman Forum, he—even to that age a worshipper of idols, and a participator in the sacrilegious rites to which almost all the nobility of Rome were wedded, and had inspired the people with the love of

The dog Anubis, and a medley crew
Of monster gods [who] 'gainst Neptune stand in arms,
'Gainst Venus and Minerva, steel-clad Mars,

whom Rome once conquered, now worshipped, all which old Victorinus had with thundering eloquence defended so many years—he now blushed not to be the child of Your Christ, and an infant at Your fountain, submitting his neck to the yoke of humility, and subduing his forehead to the reproach of the Cross.

4. O Lord, Lord, who has bowed the heavens and come down, touched the mountains and they did smoke, by what means did You convey Yourself into that bosom? He used to read, as Simplicianus said, the Holy Scripture, most studiously sought after and searched into all the

Christian writings, and said to Simplicianus,— not openly, but secretly, and as a friend—Know that I am a Christian. To which he replied, I will not believe it, nor will I rank you among the Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ. Whereupon he replied derisively, Is it then the walls that make Christians? And this he often said, that he already was a Christian; and Simplicianus making the same answer, the conceit of the walls was by the other as often renewed. For he was fearful of offending his friends, proud demon-worshippers, from the height of whose Babylonian dignity, as from cedars of Lebanon which had not yet been broken by the Lord, he thought a storm of enmity would descend upon him. But after that, from reading and inquiry, he had derived strength, and feared lest he should be denied by Christ before the holy angels if he now was afraid to confess Him before men, and appeared to himself guilty of a great fault in being ashamed of the sacraments of the humility of Your word, and not being ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of those proud demons, whose pride he had imitated and their rites adopted, he became bold-faced against vanity, and shame-faced toward the truth, and suddenly and unexpectedly said to Simplicianus,— as he himself informed me—Let us go to the church; I wish to be made a Christian. But he, not containing himself for joy, accompanied him. And having been admitted to the first sacraments of instruction, he not long after gave in his name, that he might be regenerated by baptism—Rome marveling, and the Church rejoicing. The proud saw, and were enraged; they gnashed with their teeth, and melted away! But the Lord God was the hope of Your servant, and He regarded not vanities and lying madness.

5. Finally, when the hour arrived for him to make profession of his faith (which at Rome they who are about to approach Your grace are wont to deliver from an elevated place, in view of the faithful people, in a set form of words learned by heart), the presbyters, he said, offered Victorinus to make his profession more privately, as the custom was to do to those who were likely, through bashfulness, to be afraid; but he chose rather to profess his salvation in the presence of the holy assembly. For it was not salvation that he taught in rhetoric, and yet he had publicly professed that. How much less, therefore, ought he, when pronouncing Your word, to dread Your meek flock, who, in the delivery of his own words, had not feared the mad multitudes! So, then, when he ascended to make his profession, all, as they recognized him, whispered his name one to the other, with a voice of congratulation. And who was there among them that did not know him? And there ran a low murmur through the mouths of all the rejoicing multitude, Victorinus! Victorinus! Sudden was the burst of exultation at the sight of him; and suddenly were they hushed, that they might hear him. He pronounced the true faith with an excellent boldness, and all desired to take him to their very heart— yea, by their love and joy they took him there; such were the hands with which they took him.

6. Good God, what passed in man to make him rejoice more at the salvation of a soul despaired of, and delivered from greater danger, than if there had always been hope of him, or the danger had been less? For so Thou also, O merciful Father, dost joy over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance. And with much joyfulness do we hear, whenever we hear, how the lost sheep is brought home again on the Shepherd's shoulders, while the angels rejoice, and the drachma is restored to Your treasury, the neighbors rejoicing with the woman who found it; and the joy of the solemn service of Your house constrains to tears, when in Your house it is read of Your younger son that he was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found. For You rejoice both in us and in Your angels, holy through holy

charity. For You are ever the same; for all things which abide neither the same nor forever, Thou ever know after the same manner.

7. What, then, passes in the soul when it more delights at finding or having restored to it the thing it loves than if it had always possessed them? Yea, and other things bear witness hereunto; and all things are full of witnesses, crying out, So it is. The victorious commander triumphs; yet he would not have conquered had he not fought, and the greater the peril of the battle, the more the rejoicing of the triumph. The storm tosses the voyagers, threatens shipwreck, and everyone waxes pale at the approach of death; but sky and sea grow calm, and they rejoice much, as they feared much. A loved one is sick, and his pulse indicates danger; all who desire his safety are at once sick at heart: he recovers, though not able as yet to walk with his former strength, and there is such joy as was not before when he walked sound and strong. Yea, the very pleasures of human life— not those only which rush upon us unexpectedly, and against our wills, but those that are voluntary and designed— do men obtain by difficulties. There is no pleasure at all in eating and drinking unless the pains of hunger and thirst go before. And drunkards eat certain salt meats with the view of creating a troublesome heat, which the drink allaying causes pleasure. It is also the custom that the affianced bride should not immediately be given up, that the husband may not less esteem her whom, as betrothed, he longed not for.

8. This law obtains in base and accursed joy; in that joy also which is permitted and lawful; in the sincerity of honest friendship; and in Him who was dead, and lived again, had been lost, and was found. The greater joy is everywhere preceded by the greater pain. What means this, O Lord my God, when You are, an everlasting joy unto Your own self, and some things about You are ever rejoicing in You? What means this, that this portion of things thus ebbs and flows, alternately offended and reconciled? Is this the fashion of them, and is this all You have allotted to them, whereas from the highest heaven to the lowest earth, from the beginning of the world to its end, from the angel to the worm, from the first movement unto the last, You set each in its right place, and appointed each its proper seasons, everything good after its kind? Woe is me! How high are You in the highest, and how deep in the deepest! Thou withdraw no whither, and scarcely do we return to You.

9. Haste, Lord, and act; stir us up, and call us back; inflame us, and draw us to You; stir us up, and grow sweet unto us; let us now love You, let us run after You. Do not many men, out of a deeper hell of blindness than that of Victorinus, return unto You, and approach, and are enlightened, receiving that light, which they that receive, receive power from You to become Your sons? But if they be less known among the people, even they that know them joy less for them. For when many rejoice together, the joy of each one is the fuller in that they are incited and inflamed by one another. Again, because those that are known to many influence many towards salvation, and take the lead with many to follow them. And, therefore, do they also who preceded them much rejoice in regard to them, because they rejoice not in them alone. May it be averted that in Your tabernacle the persons of the rich should be accepted before the poor, or the noble before the ignoble; since rather You have chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and base things of the world, and things which are despised, have You chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are. And yet, even that least of the apostles, by whose tongue You sound out these words, when Paulus the proconsul — his pride overcome by the apostle's warfare— was made to pass under the easy

yoke of Your Christ, and became a provincial of the great King,— he also, instead of Saul, his former name, desired to be called Paul, in testimony of so great a victory. For the enemy is more overcome in one of whom he has more hold, and by whom he has hold of more. But the proud has he more hold of by reason of their nobility; and by them of more, by reason of their authority. By how much the more welcome, then, was the heart of Victorinus esteemed, which the devil had held as an unassailable retreat, and the tongue of Victorinus, with which mighty and cutting weapon he had slain many; so much the more abundantly should Your sons rejoice, seeing that our King has bound the strong man, and they saw his vessels taken from him and cleansed, and made meet for Your honor, and become serviceable for the Lord unto every good work.

10. But when that man of Yours, Simplicianus, related this to me about Victorinus, I burned to imitate him; and it was for this end he had related it. But when he had added this also, that in the time of the Emperor Julian, there was a law made by which Christians were forbidden to teach grammar and oratory, and he, in obedience to this law, chose rather to abandon the wordy school than Your word, by which You make eloquent the tongues of the dumb, — he appeared to me not more brave than happy, in having thus discovered an opportunity of waiting on You only, which thing I was sighing for, thus bound, not with the irons of another, but my own iron will. My will was the enemy master of, and thence had made a chain for me and bound me. Because of a perverse will was lust made; and lust indulged in became custom; and custom not resisted became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together (whence I term it a chain), did a hard bondage hold me enthralled. But that new will which had begun to develop in me, freely to worship You, and to wish to enjoy You, O God, the only sure enjoyment, was not able as yet to overcome my former willfulness, made strong by long indulgence. Thus did my two wills, one old and the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, contend within me; and by their discord they unstrung my soul.

11. Thus came I to understand, from my own experience, what I had read, how that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. I verily lusted both ways; yet more in that which I approved in myself, than in that which I disapproved in myself. For in this last it was now rather not I, because in much I rather suffered against my will than did it willingly. And yet it was through me that custom became more combative against me, because I had come willingly whither I willed not. And who, then, can with any justice speak against it, when just punishment follows the sinner? Nor had I now any longer my wonted excuse, that as yet I hesitated to be above the world and serve You, because my perception of the truth was uncertain; for now it was certain. But I, still bound to the earth, refused to be Your soldier; and was as much afraid of being freed from all embarrassments, as we ought to fear to be embarrassed.

12. Thus with the baggage of the world was I sweetly burdened, as when in slumber; and the thoughts wherein I meditated upon You were like the efforts of those desiring to awake, who, still overpowered with a heavy drowsiness, are again steeped therein. And as no one desires to sleep always, and in the sober judgment of all waking is better, yet does a man generally defer to shake off drowsiness, when there is a heavy lethargy in all his limbs, and, though displeased, yet even after it is time to rise with pleasure yields to it, so was I assured that it were much better for me to give up myself to Your charity, than to yield myself to my own cupidity; but the former course satisfied and vanquished me, the latter pleased me and fettered me. Nor had I anything to

answer You calling to me, Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. And to You showing me on every side, that what Thou said was true, I, convicted by the truth, had nothing at all to reply, but the drawling and drowsy words: Presently, lo, presently; Leave me a little while. But presently, presently, had no present; and my leave me a little while went on for a long while. In vain did I delight in Your law after the inner man, when another law in my members warred against the law of my mind, and brought me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. For the law of sin is the violence of custom, whereby the mind is drawn and held, even against its will; deserving to be so held in that it so willingly falls into it. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death but Your grace only, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

13. And how, then, Thou delivered me out of the bonds of carnal desire, wherewith I was most firmly fettered, and out of the drudgery of worldly business, will I now declare and confess unto Your name, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amid increasing anxiety, I was transacting my usual affairs, and daily sighing unto You. I resorted as frequently to Your church as the business, under the burden of which I groaned, left me free to do. Alypius was with me, being after the third sitting disengaged from his legal occupation, and awaiting further opportunity of selling his counsel, as I was wont to sell the power of speaking, if it can be supplied by teaching. But Nebridius had, on account of our friendship, consented to teach under Verecundus, a citizen and a grammarian of Milan, and a very intimate friend of us all; who vehemently desired, and by the right of friendship demanded from our company, the faithful aid he greatly stood in need of. Nebridius, then, was not drawn to this by any desire of gain (for he could have made much more of his learning had he been so inclined), but, as a most sweet and kindly friend, he would not be wanting in an office of friendliness, and slight our request. But in this he acted very discreetly, taking care not to become known to those personages whom the world esteems great; thus avoiding distraction of mind, which he desired to have free and at leisure as many hours as possible, to search, or read, or hear something concerning wisdom.

14. Upon a certain day, then, Nebridius being away (why, I do not remember), lo, there came to the house to see Alypius and me, Pontitianus, a countryman of ours, in so far as he was an African, who held high office in the emperor's court. What he wanted with us I know not, but we sat down to talk together, and it fell out that upon a table before us, used for games, he noticed a book; he took it up, opened it, and, contrary to his expectation, found it to be the Apostle Paul—for he imagined it to be one of those books which I was wearing myself out in teaching. At this he looked up at me smilingly, and expressed his delight and wonder that he had so unexpectedly found this book, and this only, before my eyes. For he was both a Christian and baptized, and often prostrated himself before You our God in the church, in constant and daily prayers. When, then, I had told him that I bestowed much pains upon these writings, a conversation ensued on his speaking of Antony, the Egyptian monk, whose name was in high repute among Your servants, though up to that time not familiar to us. When he came to know this, he lingered on that topic, imparting to us a knowledge of this man so eminent, and marveling at our ignorance. But we were amazed, hearing Your wonderful works most fully manifested in times so recent, and almost in our own, wrought in the true faith and the Catholic Church. We all wondered—we, that they were so great, and he, that we had never heard of them.

15. From this his conversation turned to the companies in the monasteries, and their manners so fragrant unto You, and of the fruitful deserts of the wilderness, of which we knew nothing. And there was a monastery at Milan full of good brethren, without the walls of the city, under the fostering care of Ambrose, and we were ignorant of it. He went on with his relation, and we listened intently and in silence. He then related to us how on a certain afternoon, at Triers, when the emperor was taken up with seeing the Circensian games, he and three others, his comrades, went out for a walk in the gardens close to the city walls, and there, as they chanced to walk two and two, one strolled away with him, while the other two went by themselves; and these, in their rambling, came upon a certain cottage inhabited by some of Your servants, poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven, where they found a book in which was written the life of Antony. This one of them began to read, marvel at, and be inflamed by it; and in the reading, to meditate on embracing such a life, and giving up his worldly employments to serve You. And these were of the body called Agents for Public Affairs. Then, suddenly being overwhelmed with a holy love and a sober sense of shame, in anger with himself, he cast his eyes upon his friend, exclaiming, Tell me, I entreat you, what end we are striving for by all these labors of ours. What is our aim? What is our motive in doing service? Can our hopes in court rise higher than to be ministers of the emperor? And in such a position, what is there not brittle, and fraught with danger, and by how many dangers arrive we at greater danger? And when arrive we there? But if I desire to become a friend of God, behold, I am even now made it. Thus spoke he, and in the pangs of the travail of the new life, he turned his eyes again upon the page and continued reading, and was inwardly changed where Thou saw, and his mind was divested of the world, as soon became evident; for as he read, and the surging of his heart rolled along, he raged awhile, discerned and resolved on a better course, and now, having become Yours, he said to his friend, Now have I broken loose from those hopes of ours, and am determined to serve God; and this, from this hour, in this place, I enter upon. If you are reluctant to imitate me, hinder me not. The other replied that he would cleave to him, to share in so great a reward and so great a service. Thus both of them, being now Yours, were building a tower at the necessary cost, — of forsaking all that they had and following You. Then Pontitianus, and he that had walked with him through other parts of the garden, came in search of them to the same place, and having found them, reminded them to return as the day had declined. But they, making known to him their resolution and purpose, and how such a resolve had sprung up and become confirmed in them, entreated them not to molest them, if they refused to join themselves unto them. But the others, no whit changed from their former selves, did yet (as he said) bewail themselves, and piously congratulated them, recommending themselves to their prayers; and with their hearts inclining towards earthly things, returned to the palace. But the other two, setting their affections upon heavenly things, remained in the cottage. And both of them had affianced brides, who, when they heard of this, dedicated also their virginity unto God.

16. Such was the story of Pontitianus. But You, O Lord, while he was speaking, turned me towards myself, taking me from behind my back, where I had placed myself while unwilling to exercise self-scrutiny; and Thou set me face to face with myself, that I might behold how foul I was, and how crooked and sordid, bespotted and ulcerous. And I beheld and loathed myself; and whither to fly from myself I discovered not. And if I sought to turn my gaze away from myself, he continued his narrative, and You again opposed me unto myself, and thrust me before my own eyes, that I might discover my iniquity, and hate it. I had known it, but acted as though I knew it not—winked at it, and forgot it.

17. But now, the more ardently I loved those whose healthful affections I heard tell of, that they had given up themselves wholly to You to be cured, the more did I abhor myself when compared with them. For many of my years (perhaps twelve) had passed away since my nineteenth, when, on the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*, I was roused to a desire for wisdom; and still I was delaying to reject mere worldly happiness, and to devote myself to search out that whereof not the finding alone, but the bare search, ought to have been preferred before the treasures and kingdoms of this world, though already found, and before the pleasures of the body, though encompassing me at my will. But I, miserable young man, supremely miserable even in the very outset of my youth, had entreated chastity of You, and said, Grant me chastity and continency, but not yet. For I was afraid lest You should hear me soon, and soon deliver me from the disease of concupiscence, which I desired to have satisfied rather than extinguished. And I had wandered through perverse ways in a sacrilegious superstition; not indeed assured thereof, but preferring that to the others, which I did not seek religiously, but opposed maliciously.

18. And I had thought that I delayed from day to day to reject worldly hopes and follow You only, because there did not appear anything certain whereunto to direct my course. And now had the day arrived in which I was to be laid bare to myself, and my conscience was to chide me. Where are you, O my tongue? You said, verily, that for an uncertain truth you were not willing to cast off the baggage of vanity. Behold, now it is certain, and yet does that burden still oppress you; whereas they who neither have so worn themselves out with searching after it, nor yet have spent ten years and more in thinking thereon, have had their shoulders unburdened, and gotten wings to fly away. Thus was I inwardly consumed and mightily confounded with an horrible shame, while Pontitianus was relating these things. And he, having finished his story, and the business he came for, went his way. And unto myself, what said I not within myself? With what scourges of rebuke lashed I not my soul to make it follow me, struggling to go after You! Yet it drew back; it refused, and exercised not itself. All its arguments were exhausted and confuted. There remained a silent trembling; and it feared, as it would death, to be restrained from the flow of that custom whereby it was wasting away even to death.

19. In the midst, then, of this great strife of my inner dwelling, which I had strongly raised up against my soul in the chamber of my heart, troubled both in mind and countenance, I seized upon Alypius, and exclaimed: What is wrong with us? What is this? What did you hear? The unlearned start up and 'take' heaven, and we, with our learning, but wanting heart, see where we wallow in flesh and blood! Because others have preceded us, are we ashamed to follow, and not rather ashamed at not following? Some such words I gave utterance to, and in my excitement flung myself from him, while he gazed upon me in silent astonishment. For I spoke not in my wonted tone, and my brow, cheeks, eyes, color, tone of voice, all expressed my emotion more than the words. There was a little garden belonging to our lodging, of which we had the use, as of the whole house; for the master, our landlord, did not live there. Thither had the tempest within my breast hurried me, where no one might impede the fiery struggle in which I was engaged with myself, until it came to the issue that Thou knew, though I did not. But I was mad that I might be whole, and dying that I might have life, knowing what evil thing I was, but not knowing what good thing I was shortly to become. Into the garden, then, I retired, Alypius following my steps. For his presence was no bar to my solitude; or how could he desert me so troubled? We sat down at as great a distance from the house as we could. I was disquieted in spirit, being most impatient with myself that I entered not into Your will and covenant, O

my God, which all my bones cried out unto me to enter, extolling it to the skies. And we enter not therein by ships, or chariots, or feet, no, nor by going so far as I had come from the house to that place where we were sitting. For not to go only, but to enter there, was naught else but to will to go, but to will it resolutely and thoroughly; not to stagger and sway about this way and that, a changeable and half-wounded will, wrestling, with one part falling as another rose.

20. Finally, in the very fever of my irresolution, I made many of those motions with my body which men sometimes desire to do, but cannot, if either they have not the limbs, or if their limbs be bound with fetters, weakened by disease, or hindered in any other way. Thus, if I tore my hair, struck my forehead, or if, entwining my fingers, I clasped my knee, this I did because I willed it. But I might have willed and not done it, if the power of motion in my limbs had not responded. So many things, then, I did, when to have the will was not to have the power, and I did not that which both with an unequalled desire I longed more to do, and which shortly when I should will I should have the power to do; because shortly when I should will, I should will thoroughly. For in such things the power was one with the will, and to will was to do, and yet was it not done; and more readily did the body obey the slightest wish of the soul in the moving its limbs at the order of the mind, than the soul obeyed itself to accomplish in the will alone this its great will.

21. Whence is this monstrous thing? And why is it? Let Your mercy shine on me, that I may inquire, if so be the hiding-places of man's punishment, and the darkest contritions of the sons of Adam, may perhaps answer me. Whence is this monstrous thing? And why is it? The mind commands the body, and it obeys immediately; the mind commands itself, and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to be moved, and such readiness is there that the command is scarce to be distinguished from the obedience. Yet the mind is mind, and the hand is body. The mind commands the mind to will, and yet, though it be itself, it obeys not. Whence this monstrous thing? And why is it? I repeat, it commands itself to will, and would not give the command unless it willed; yet is not that done which it commands. But it wills not entirely; therefore it commands not entirely. For so far forth it commands, as it wills; and so far forth is the thing commanded not done, as it wills not. For the will commands that there be a will;— not another, but itself. But it does not command entirely, therefore that is not which it commands. For were it entire, it would not even command it to be, because it would already be. It is, therefore, no monstrous thing partly to will, partly to be unwilling, but an infirmity of the mind, that it does not wholly rise, sustained by truth, pressed down by custom. And so there are two wills, because one of them is not entire; and the one is supplied with what the other needs.

22. Let them perish from Your presence, O God, as vain talkers and deceivers of the soul do perish, who, observing that there were two wills in deliberating, affirm that there are two kinds of minds in us—one good, the other evil. They themselves verily are evil when they hold these evil opinions; and they shall become good when they hold the truth, and shall consent unto the truth, that Your apostle may say unto them, You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord. But, they, desiring to be light, not in the Lord, but in themselves, conceiving the nature of the soul to be the same as that which God is, are made more gross darkness; for that through a shocking arrogance they went farther from You, the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world. Take heed what you say, and blush for shame; draw near unto Him and be lightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed. I, when I was deliberating upon serving the Lord my God now, as I had long purposed—I it was who willed, I who was unwilling. It was

I, even I myself. I neither willed entirely, nor was entirely unwilling. Therefore was I at war with myself, and destroyed by myself. And this destruction overtook me against my will, and yet showed not the presence of another mind, but the punishment of my own. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me, — the punishment of a more unconfined sin, in that I was a son of Adam.

23. For if there be as many contrary natures as there are conflicting wills, there will not now be two natures only, but many. If anyone deliberate whether he should go to their conventicle, or to the theatre, those men at once cry out, Behold, here are two natures—one good, drawing this way, another bad, drawing back that way; for whence else is this indecision between conflicting wills? But I reply that both are bad—that which draws to them, and that which draws back to the theatre. But they believe not that will to be other than good which draws to them. Supposing, then, one of us should deliberate, and through the conflict of his two wills should waver whether he should go to the theatre or to our church, would not these also waver what to answer? For either they must confess, which they are not willing to do, that the will which leads to our church is good, as well as that of those who have received and are held by the mysteries of theirs, or they must imagine that there are two evil natures and two evil minds in one man, at war one with the other; and that will not be true which they say, that there is one good and another bad; or they must be converted to the truth, and no longer deny that where anyone deliberates, there is one soul fluctuating between conflicting wills.

24. Let them no more say, then, when they perceive two wills to be antagonistic to each other in the same man, that the contest is between two opposing minds, of two opposing substances, from two opposing principles, the one good and the other bad. For Thou, O true God, dost disprove, check, and convince them; like as when both wills are bad, one deliberates whether he should kill a man by poison, or by the sword; whether he should take possession of this or that estate of another's, when he cannot both; whether he should purchase pleasure by prodigality, or retain his money by covetousness; whether he should go to the circus or the theatre, if both are open on the same day; or, thirdly, whether he should rob another man's house, if he have the opportunity; or, fourthly, whether he should commit adultery, if at the same time he have the means of doing so—all these things concurring in the same point of time, and all being equally longed for, although impossible to be enacted at one time. For they rend the mind amid four, or even (among the vast variety of things men desire) more antagonistic wills, nor do they yet affirm that there are so many different substances. Thus also is it in wills which are good. For I ask them, is it a good thing to have delight in reading the apostle, or good to have delight in a sober psalm, or good to discourse on the gospel? To each of these they will answer, It is good. What, then, if all equally delight us, and all at the same time? Do not different wills distract the mind, when a man is deliberating which he should rather choose? Yet are they all good, and are at variance until one be fixed upon, whither the whole united will may be borne, which before was divided into many. Thus, also, when above eternity delights us, and the pleasure of temporal good holds us down below, it is the same soul which wills not that or this with an entire will, and is therefore torn asunder with grievous perplexities, while out of truth it prefers that, but out of custom forbears not this.

25. Thus was I sick and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain till that was utterly broken, whereby I now was but slightly, but still

was held. And You, O Lord, pressed upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and that same slender remaining tie not being broken off, it should recover strength, and enchain me the faster. For I said mentally, Lo, let it be done now, let it be done now. And as I spoke, I all but came to a resolve. I all but did it, yet I did it not. Yet fell I not back to my old condition, but took up my position hard by, and drew breath. And I tried again, and wanted but very little of reaching it, and somewhat less, and then all but touched and grasped it; and yet came not at it, nor touched, nor grasped it, hesitating to die unto death, and to live unto life; and the worse, whereto I had been habituated, prevailed more with me than the better, which I had not tried. And the very moment in which I was to become another man, the nearer it approached me, the greater horror did it strike into me; but it did not strike me back, nor turn me aside, but kept me in suspense.

26. The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, Do you part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with you forever? And from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for you forever? And what did they suggest to me in the words this or that? What is it that they suggested, O my God? Let Your mercy avert it from the soul of Your servant. What impurities did they suggest! What shame! And now I far less than half heard them, not openly showing themselves and contradicting me, but muttering, as it were, behind my back, and furtively plucking me as I was departing, to make me look back upon them. Yet they did delay me, so that I hesitated to burst and shake myself free from them, and to leap over whither I was called—an unruly habit saying to me, Do you think you can live without them?

27. But now it said this very faintly; for on that side towards which I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, did the chaste dignity of Continnence appear unto me, cheerful, but not dissolutely gay, honestly alluring me to come and doubt nothing, and extending her holy hands, full of a multiplicity of good examples, to receive and embrace me. There were there so many young men and maidens, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and ancient virgins, and Continnence herself in all, not barren, but a fruitful mother of children of joys, by You, O Lord, her Husband. And she smiled on me with an encouraging mockery, as if to say, Can you not do what these youths and maidens can? Or can one or other do it of themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why do you stand in your own strength, and so stand not? Cast yourself upon Him; fear not, He will not withdraw that you should fall; cast yourself upon Him without fear, He will receive you, and heal you. And I blushed beyond measure, for I still heard the muttering of those toys, and hung in suspense. And she again seemed to say, Shut up your ears against those unclean members of yours upon the earth, that they may be mortified. They tell you of delights, but not as does the law of the Lord your God. This controversy in my heart was naught but self against self. But Alypius, sitting close by my side, awaited in silence the result of my unwonted emotion.

28. But when a profound reflection had, from the secret depths of my soul, drawn together and heaped up all my misery before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by as mighty a shower of tears. Which, that I might pour forth fully, with its natural expressions, I stole away from Alypius; for it suggested itself to me that solitude was fitter for the business of weeping. So I retired to such a distance that even his presence could not be oppressive to me. Thus was it with me at that time, and he perceived it; for something, I believe, I had spoken,

wherein the sound of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and in that state had I risen up. He then remained where we had been sitting, most completely astonished. I flung myself down, how, I know not, under a certain fig-tree, giving free course to my tears, and the streams of my eyes gushed out, an acceptable sacrifice unto You. And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, spoke I much unto You—But You, O Lord, how long? How long, Lord? Will You be angry forever? Oh, remember not against us former iniquities; for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries—How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?

29. I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and oft repeating, Take up and read; take up and read. Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book, and to read the first chapter I should light upon. For I had heard of Antony, that, accidentally coming in while the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, Go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. And by such oracle was he immediately converted unto You. So quickly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell—Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended—by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

30. Closing the book, then, and putting either my finger between, or some other mark, I now with a tranquil countenance made it known to Alypius. And he thus disclosed to me what was wrought in him, which I knew not. He asked to look at what I had read. I showed him; and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. This it was, verily, Him that is weak in the faith, receive; which he applied to himself, and discovered to me. By this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, very much in accord with his character (wherein, for the better, he was always far different from me), without any restless delay he joined me. Thence we go in to my mother. We make it known to her—she rejoices. We relate how it came to pass—she leaps for joy, and triumphs, and blesses You, who art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; for she perceived You to have given her more for me than she used to ask by her pitiful and most doleful groanings. For Thou so converted me unto Yourself, that I sought neither a wife, nor any other of this world's hopes, standing in that rule of faith in which Thou, so many years before, had showed me unto her in a vision. And you turned her grief into a gladness, much more plentiful than she had desired, and much dearer and chaster than she used to crave, by having grandchildren of my body.

Book IX, excerpts

1. O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Let my heart and my tongue praise You, and let all my bones say, Lord, who is like You? Let them so say, and answer Thou me, and say unto my soul, I am Your salvation. Who am I, and what is my nature? How evil have not my deeds been; or if not my deeds, my words; or if not my words, my will? But You, O Lord, art good and merciful, and Your right hand had respect unto the profoundness of my death, and removed from the bottom of my heart that abyss of corruption. And this was the result, that I willed not to do what I willed, and willed to do what you willed. But where, during all those years, and out of what deep and secret retreat was my free will summoned forth in a moment, whereby I gave my neck to Your easy yoke, and my shoulders to Your light burden, O Christ Jesus, my strength and my Redeemer? How sweet did it suddenly become to me to be without the delights of trifles! And what at one time I feared to lose, it was now a joy to me to put away. For Thou cast them away from me, Thou true and highest sweetness. Thou cast them away, and instead of them entered in Yourself, — sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood; brighter than all light, but more veiled than all mysteries; more exalted than all honor, but not to the exalted in their own conceits. Now was my soul free from the gnawing cares of seeking and getting, and of wallowing and exciting the itch of lust. And I babbled unto You my brightness, my riches, and my health, the Lord my God.

2. And it seemed good to me, as before You, not tumultuously to snatch away, but gently to withdraw the service of my tongue from the talker's trade; that the young, who thought not on Your law, nor on Your peace, but on mendacious follies and forensic strifes, might no longer purchase at my mouth equipments for their vehemence. And opportunely there wanted but a few days unto the Vacation of the Vintage; and I determined to endure them, in order to leave in the usual way, and, being redeemed by You, no more to return for sale. Our intention then was known to You; but to men— excepting our own friends— was it not known. For we had determined among ourselves not to let it get abroad to any; although You had given to us, ascending from the valley of tears, and singing the song of degrees, sharp arrows, and destroying coals, against the deceitful tongue, which in giving counsel opposes, and in showing love consumes, as it is wont to do with its food.

3. You had penetrated our hearts with Your charity, and we carried Your words fixed, as it were, in our bowels; and the examples of Your servant, whom of black You had made bright, and of dead, alive, crowded in the bosom of our thoughts, burned and consumed our heavy torpor, that we might not topple into the abyss; and they enkindled us exceedingly, that every breath of the deceitful tongue of the gainsayer might inflame us the more, not extinguish us. Nevertheless, because for Your name's sake which You have sanctified throughout the earth, this, our vow and purpose, might also find commenders, it looked like a vaunting of oneself not to wait for the vacation, now so near, but to leave beforehand a public profession, and one, too, under general observation; so that all who looked on this act of mine, and saw how near was the vintage-time I desired to anticipate, would talk of me a great deal as if I were trying to appear to be a great person. And what purpose would it serve that people should consider and dispute about my intention, and that our good should be evil spoken of?

4. Furthermore, this very summer, from too great literary labor, my lungs began to be weak, and with difficulty to draw deep breaths; showing by the pains in my chest that they were affected, and refusing too loud or prolonged speaking. This had at first been a trial to me, for it compelled me almost of necessity to lay down that burden of teaching; or, if I could be cured and become strong again, at least to leave it off for a while. But when the full desire for leisure, that I might see that You are the Lord, arose, and was confirmed in me, my God, You know I even began to rejoice that I had this excuse ready—and that not a feigned one—which might somewhat temper the offense taken by those who for their sons' good wished me never to have the freedom of sons. Full, therefore, with such joy, I bore it till that period of time had passed—perhaps it was some twenty days—yet they were bravely borne; for the cupidity which was wont to sustain part of this weighty business had departed, and I had remained overwhelmed had not its place been supplied by patience. Some of Your servants, my brethren, may perchance say that I sinned in this, in that having once fully, and from my heart, entered on Your warfare, I permitted myself to sit a single hour in the seat of falsehood. I will not contend. But hast not Thou, O most merciful Lord, pardoned and remitted this sin also, with my others, so horrible and deadly, in the holy water?

5. Verecundus was wasted with anxiety at that our happiness, since he, being most firmly held by his bonds, saw that he would lose our fellowship. For he was not yet a Christian, though his wife was one of the faithful; and yet hereby, being more firmly enchained than by anything else, was he held back from that journey which we had commenced. Nor, he declared, did he wish to be a Christian on any other terms than those that were impossible. However, he invited us most courteously to make use of his country house so long as we should stay there. You, O Lord, wilt recompense him for this at the resurrection of the just, seeing that You have already given him the lot of the righteous. For although, when we were absent at Rome, he, being overtaken with bodily sickness, and therein being made a Christian, and one of the faithful, departed this life, yet had Thou mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us also; lest, thinking on the exceeding kindness of our friend to us, and unable to count him in Your flock, we should be tortured with intolerable grief. Thanks be unto You, our God, we are Yours. Your exhortations, consolations, and faithful promises assure us that Thou now repay Verecundus for that country house at Cassiacum, where from the fever of the world we found rest in You, with the perpetual freshness of Your Paradise, in that You have forgiven him his earthly sins, in that mountain flowing with milk, that fruitful mountain—Your own.

6. He then was at that time full of grief; but Nebridius was joyous. Although he also, not being yet a Christian, had fallen into the pit of that most pernicious error of believing Your Son to be a phantasm, yet, coming out thence, he held the same belief that we did; not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of Your Church, but a most earnest inquirer after truth. Whom, not long after our conversion and regeneration by Your baptism, he being also a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving You in perfect chastity and continency among his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him, You released from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham's bosom. Whatever that may be which is signified by that bosom, there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, Your son, O Lord, adopted of a freedman; there he lives. For what other place could there be for such a soul? There lives he, concerning which he used to ask me much—me, an inexperienced, feeble one. Now he puts not his ear unto my mouth, but his spiritual mouth unto Your fountain, and drinks as much as he is

able, wisdom according to his desire—happy without end. Nor do I believe that he is so inebriated with it as to forget me, seeing Thou, O Lord, whom he drinks, art mindful of us. Thus, then, were we comforting the sorrowing Verecundus (our friendship being untouched) concerning our conversion, and exhorting him to a faith according to his condition, I mean, his married state. And tarrying for Nebridius to follow us, which being so near, he was just about to do, when, behold, those days passed over at last; for long and many they seemed, on account of my love of easeful liberty, that I might sing unto You from my very marrow. My heart said unto You—I have sought Your face; Your face, Lord, will I seek.

7. And the day arrived on which, in very deed, I was to be released from the Professorship of Rhetoric, from which in intention I had been already released. And done it was; and Thou delivered my tongue whence You had already delivered my heart; and full of joy I blessed You for it, and retired with all mine to the villa. What I accomplished here in writing, which was now wholly devoted to Your service, though still, in this pause as it were, panting from the school of pride, my books testify, — those in which I disputed with my friends, and those with myself alone before You; and what with the absent Nebridius, my letters testify. And when can I find time to recount all Your great benefits which You bestowed upon us at that time, especially as I am hasting on to still greater mercies? For my memory calls upon me, and pleasant it is to me, O Lord, to confess unto You, by what inward goads You subdued me, and how Thou made me low, bringing down the mountains and hills of my imaginations, and straightened my crookedness, and smooth my rough ways; and by what means Thou also subdued that brother of my heart, Alypius, unto the name of Your only-begotten, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which he at first refused to have inserted in our writings. For he rather desired that they should savor of the cedars of the schools, which the Lord has now broken down, than of the wholesome herbs of the Church, hostile to serpents.

8. What utterances sent I up unto You, my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs and sounds of devotion which exclude all swelling of spirit, when new to Your true love, at rest in the villa with Alypius, a catechumen like myself, my mother cleaving unto us—in woman's garb truly, but with a man's faith, with the peacefulness of age, full of motherly love and Christian piety! What utterances used I to send up unto You in those Psalms, and how was I inflamed towards You by them, and burned to rehearse them, if it were possible, throughout the whole world, against the pride of the human race! And yet they are sung throughout the whole world, and none can hide himself from Your heat. With what vehement and bitter sorrow was I indignant at the Manichæans; whom yet again I pitied, for that they were ignorant of those sacraments, those medicaments, and were mad against the antidote which might have made them sane! I wished that they had been somewhere near me then, and, without my being aware of their presence, could have beheld my face, and heard my words, when I read the fourth Psalm in that time of my leisure—how that Psalm wrought upon me. When I called upon You, Thou heard me, O God of my righteousness; You have enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. Oh that they might have heard what I uttered on these words, without my knowing whether they heard or no, lest they should think that I spoke it because of them! For, of a truth, neither should I have said the same things, nor in the way I said them, if I had perceived that I was heard and seen by them; and had I spoken them, they would not so have received them as when I spoke by and for myself before You, out of the private feelings of my soul.

23. As the day now approached on which [Monica] was to depart this life (which day Thou knew, we did not), it fell out— Thou, as I believe, by Your secret ways arranging it— that she and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window, from which the garden of the house we occupied at Ostia could be seen; at which place, removed from the crowd, we were resting ourselves for the voyage, after the fatigues of a long journey. We then were conversing alone very pleasantly; and, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we were seeking between ourselves in the presence of the Truth, which You are, of what nature the eternal life of the saints would be, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man. But yet we opened wide the mouth of our heart, after those supernal streams of Your fountain, the fountain of life, which is with You; that being sprinkled with it according to our capacity, we might in some measure weigh so high a mystery.

24. And when our conversation had arrived at that point, that the very highest pleasure of the carnal senses, and that in the very brightest material light, seemed by reason of the sweetness of that life not only not worthy of comparison, but not even of mention, we, lifting ourselves with a more ardent affection towards the Selfsame, did gradually pass through all corporeal things, and even the heaven itself, whence sun, and moon, and stars shine upon the earth; yea, we soared higher yet by inward musing, and discoursing, and admiring Your works; and we came to our own minds, and went beyond them, that we might advance as high as that region of unfailing plenty, where You feed Israel forever with the food of truth, and where life is that Wisdom by whom all these things are made, both which have been, and which are to come; and she is not made, but is as she has been, and so shall ever be; yea, rather, to have been, and to be hereafter, are not in her, but only to be, seeing she is eternal, for to have been and to be hereafter are not eternal. And while we were thus speaking, and straining after her, we slightly touched her with the whole effort of our heart; and we sighed, and there left bound the first-fruits of the Spirit; and returned to the noise of our own mouth, where the word uttered has both beginning and end. And what is like Your Word, our Lord, who remains in Himself without becoming old, and makes all things new?

25. We were saying, then, If to any man the tumult of the flesh were silenced—silenced the phantasies of earth, waters, and air—silenced, too, the poles; yea, the very soul be silenced to herself, and go beyond herself by not thinking of herself—silenced fancies and imaginary revelations, every tongue, and every sign, and whatsoever exists by passing away, since, if any could hearken, all these say, We created not ourselves, but were created by Him who abides forever: If, having uttered this, they now should be silenced, having only quickened our ears to Him who created them, and He alone speak not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His word, not by fleshly tongue, nor angelic voice, nor sound of thunder, nor the obscurity of a similitude, but might hear Him— Him whom in these we love— without these, like as we two now strained ourselves, and with rapid thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom which remains over all. If this could be sustained, and other visions of a far different kind be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and envelope its beholder amid these inward joys, so that his life might be eternally like that one moment of knowledge which we now sighed after, were not this Enter into the joy of Your Lord? And when shall that be? When we shall all rise again; but all shall not be changed.

26. Such things was I saying; and if not after this manner, and in these words, yet, Lord, You know, that in that day when we were talking thus, this world with all its delights grew contemptible to us, even while we spoke. Then said my mother, Son, for myself, I have no longer any pleasure in anything in this life. What I want here further, and why I am here, I know not, now that my hopes in this world are satisfied. There was indeed one thing for which I wished to tarry a little in this life, and that was that I might see you a Catholic Christian before I died. My God has exceeded this abundantly, so that I see you despising all earthly felicity, made His servant—what do I here?

27. What reply I made unto her to these things I do not well remember. However, scarcely five days after, or not much more, she was prostrated by fever; and while she was sick, she one day sank into a swoon, and was for a short time unconscious of visible things. We hurried up to her; but she soon regained her senses, and gazing on me and my brother as we stood by her, she said to us inquiringly, Where was I? Then looking intently at us stupefied with grief, Here, says she, shall you bury your mother. I was silent, and refrained from weeping; but my brother said something, wishing her, as the happier lot, to die in her own country and not abroad. She, when she heard this, with anxious countenance arrested him with her eye, as savoring of such things, and then gazing at me, Behold, says she, what he says; and soon after to us both she says, Lay this body anywhere, let not the care for it trouble you at all. This only I ask, that you will remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be. And when she had given forth this opinion in such words as she could, she was silent, being in pain with her increasing sickness.

28. But, as I reflected on Your gifts, O you invisible God, which Thou instill into the hearts of Your faithful ones, whence such marvelous fruits do spring, I did rejoice and give thanks unto You, calling to mind what I knew before, how she had ever burned with anxiety respecting her burial-place, which she had provided and prepared for herself by the body of her husband. For as they had lived very peacefully together, her desire had also been (so little is the human mind capable of grasping things divine) that this should be added to that happiness, and be talked of among men, that after her wandering beyond the sea, it had been granted her that they both, so united on earth, should lie in the same grave. But when this uselessness had, through the bounty of Your goodness, begun to be no longer in her heart, I knew not, and I was full of joy admiring what she had thus disclosed to me; though indeed in that our conversation in the window also, when she said, What do I tarry here any longer? she appeared not to desire to die in her own country. I heard afterwards, too, that at the time we were at Ostia, with a maternal confidence she one day, when I was absent, was speaking with certain of my friends on the contemning of this life, and the blessing of death; and when they—amazed at the courage which You had given to her, a woman—asked her whether she did not dread leaving her body at such a distance from her own city, she replied, Nothing is far to God; nor need I fear lest He should be ignorant at the end of the world of the place whence He is to raise me up. On the ninth day, then, of her sickness, the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine, was that religious and devout soul set free from the body.