

Apology Please help support the mission of New Advent and get the full contents of this website as an instant Includes the Catholic Encyclopedia, Church Fathers, Summa, Bible and more · all for only \$19.99... Chapter 1 the Roman Empire, if, seated for the administration of justice on your lofty tribunal, under the gaze of every eye occupying there all but the highest position in the state, you may not openly inquire into and sift before the world the real truth in regard to the charges made against the Christians; if in this case alone you are afraid or ashamed to exercise your authority in making public inquiry with the carefulness which becomes justice; if, finally, the extreme severities inflicted on our people in recently private judgments, stand in the way of our being permitted to defer ourselves before you, you cannot surely forbid the Truth to reach your ears by the secret pathway of a noiseless voice. She has no appeals to make to you in regard of her condition, for that does not excite her wonder. She knows she is but a sojourner on the earth, and that among strangers she naturally finds foes; and more than this, that her own life, her dwelling-place, her hope, her recompense, her honours, are above. One thing, meanwhile, she anxiously desires of earthly rulers · not to be condemned unknown. What harm can it do to the laws, supreme in their domain, to give her a hearing? Nay, for that part of it, will not their absolute supremacy be more conspicuous in their condemning her after she has made her plea? But if, unheard, sentence is pronounced against her, besides the odium of an unjust sentence you will incur the merited suspicion of doing it with some idea that it is unjust, as not wishing to hear what you might not be able to hear and condemn. We lay this before you as the first ground on which we urge that your hatred against the name of Christian is unjust. And the very reason which seems to excuse this injustice (I mean ignorance) at once aggravates and convicts it. For what is there more unfair than to hate a thing of which you know nothing, even when it deserves to be hated? Hatred is only merited when it is known to be merited. But without that knowledge, when can justice be vindicated? For that is to be proved, not from the mere fact that an aversion exists, but from acquaintance with the subject. When men, then, give way to a dislike simply because they are entirely ignorant of the nature of the thing disliked, why may it not be precisely the very sort of thing they should not dislike? So we maintain that they are both ignorant while they hate us, and hate us unrighteously while they continue in ignorance, the one thing being the result of the other either way of it. The proof of their ignorance, at once condemning and excusing their injustice, is this, that those who once hated Christianity because they knew nothing about it, no sooner come to know it than they all lay down at once their enmity. From being its haters they become its disciples. By simply becoming acquainted with it, they begin now to hate what they had formerly been, and to profess what they had formerly despised. Their numbers are as great as are laid to our charge. The outcry is that the State is filled with Christians · that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands: they make lamentation, as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the profession of the Christian faith; and yet for all, their minds are not awakened to the thought of some good they have failed to notice in it. They must not allow any thoughts or suspicions to cross their minds; they have no desire to make closer trial. Here alone the curiosity of human nature slumbers. They like to be ignorant, though to others the knowledge has been bliss. Anacharsis reproved the Russians for venturing to criticise the cultured; how much more this judging of those who know, by men who are entirely ignorant might he have denounced! Because they already dislike, they want to know no more. Thus they prejudge that those who are ignorant to be such, that, if they came to know it, it could no longer be the object of their aversion; since, if inquiry finds nothing worthy of dislike, it is certainly proper to cease from an unjust dislike, while if its bad character comes plainly out, instead of the detestation entertained for it being thus diminished, a stronger reason for perseverance in that detestation is obtained, even under the authority of justice itself. But, says one, a thing is good merely because multitudes go over to it; for how many have the bent of their nature towards whatever is popular, how many go astray into ways of error! It is undoubted. Yet a thing that is thoroughly evil, not even those whom it catches away venture to defend as good. Nature throws a veil either of fear or shame over all evil. For instance, you find criminals are eager to conceal themselves, avoid appearing in public, are in trepidation when they are caught, and confess their guilt, when they are accused; even when they are put to the rack, they do not easily or always confess; when there is no doubt about their condemnation, they grieve for what they have done. In their self-communings they admit of being impelled by sinful dispositions, but they lay the blame either on fate or on the stars. They are unwilling to acknowledge that the thing is theirs, because they own that it is wicked. But what is there like this in the Christian case? The only shame or regret he feels, is at not having been a Christian earlier. If he is pointed out, he glories in it; if he is accused, he offers no defense; interrogated, he makes voluntary confession; condemned he renders

What sort of evil thing is this, which wants all the ordinary peculiarities of evil· fear, shame, subterfuge, penitence, lamenting? What! Is that a crime in which the criminal rejoices? To be accused of which is his ardent wish, to be punished for which is his felicity? You cannot call it madness, you who stand convicted of knowing nothing of the matter. Chapter 2 If, again, it is certain that we are the most wicked of men, why do you treat us so differently from our fellows, that is, from other criminals, it being only fair that the same crime should get the same treatment? If the charges made against us are made against others, they are permitted to make use both of their own lips and their pleaders to show their innocence. They have full opportunity of answer and debate; in fact, it is against the law to condemn anybody undefended and unheard. Christians alone are forbidden to say anything in exculpation of themselves in defense of the truth, to help the judge to a righteous decision; all that is cared about is having what the public hatred demands · the confession of the name, not examination of the charge: while in your ordinary judicial investigations, on a man's confession of the crime of murder, or sacrilege, or incest, or treason, to take the point on which we are accused, you are not content to proceed at once to sentence · you do not take that step till you thoroughly examine the circumstances of the confession · what is the real character of the deed, how often, where, in what place, when he has done it, who were privy to it, and who actually took part with him in it. Nothing like this is done in our case, though the falsehoods disseminated about us ought to have the same sifting, that it might be found how many murdered children each of us had tasted; how many incests each of us had shrouded in darkness; what cooks had been witness of our deeds. Oh, how great the glory of the ruler who should bring to light some Christian who had devoured a hundred infants! But, instead of that, we find that even inquiry in regard to our case is forbidden. For the younger Pliny, when he was ruler of a province, having condemned some Christians to death, and driven some to steadfastness, being still annoyed by their great numbers, at last sought the advice of Trajan, the reigning emperor, to what he was to do with the rest, explaining to his master that, except an obstinate disinclination to offer sacrifices, he found in the religious services nothing but meetings at early morning for singing hymns to Christ and God, and sealing home their way of life by a united pledge to be faithful to their religion, forbidding murder, adultery, dishonesty, and other crimes. Upon this Trajan wrote back that Christians were by no means to be sought, but if they were brought before him, they should be punished. O miserable deliverance · under the necessities of our case, a self-contradiction! It forbids them to be sought after as innocent, and it commands them to be punished as guilty. It is at once merciful and cruel; it passes by, and it punishes. Why do you play a game of evasion upon yourself, O Judgment? If you condemn, why do you not also inquire. If you do not inquire, why do you not also search? Military stations are distributed through all the provinces for tracking robbers. Against traitors and public foes every man is a soldier; search is made even for their confederates and accessories. The Christian alone must not be sought, though he may be brought and accused before the judge; as if a search had any other end than that in view! And yet you condemn the man for whom nobody wished a search to be made when he is presented to you, and who even if he does not deserve punishment, I suppose, because of his guilt, but because, though forbidden to be sought, he was found. And too, you do not in that case deal with us in the ordinary way of judicial proceedings against offenders; for, in the case of others denying, you apply the torture to make them confess · Christians alone you torture, to make them confess, whereas, if we were guilty of any crime, we should be sure to deny it, and you with your tortures would force us to confession. Nor indeed should you hold that our crimes require no such investigation merely on the ground that we are convinced by our confession of the name that the deeds were done · you who are daily wont, though you know what murder is, none the less to extract from the confessed murderer a full account of how the crime was perpetrated; that with all the greater perversity you act, when, holding our crimes proved by our confession of the name of Christ, you drive us by torture to fall from our confession, that, repudiating the name, we may in like manner repudiate the crimes with which, from that same confession, you had assumed that we were chargeable. I suppose, though you think us to be the worst of mankind, you do not wish us to perish. For thus, no doubt, you are in the habit of bidding a murderer deny, and of ordering the man guilty of sacrilege to the rack if he persevere in his acknowledgment! I am the way of it? But if thus you do not deal with us as criminals, you declare us thereby innocent, when as innocents we are anxious that we do not persevere in a confession which you know will bring on us a condemnation of necessity, at your hands. I am a Christian, the man cries out. He tells you what he is; you wish to hear from him what he is not. Occupying your place of authority to extort the truth, you do your utmost to get lies from us. I am, he says, what which you ask me if I am. Why do you torture me to sin? I confess, and you put me to the rack. What would

I denied? Certainly you give no ready credence to others when they deny. When we deny, you believe at once the perversity of yours lead you to suspect that there is some hidden power in the case under whose influence you are against the forms, against the nature of public justice, even against the very laws themselves. For, unless I am mistaken, the laws enjoin offenders to be searched out, and not to be hidden away. They lay it down that persons guilty of a crime are to be condemned, not acquitted. The decrees of the senate, the commands of your chiefs, lay this down. The power of which you are servants is a civil, not a tyrannical domination. Among tyrants, indeed, torture is to be inflicted even as punishments: with you they are mitigated to a means of questioning alone. Keep to your course these as necessary till confession is obtained; and if the torture is anticipated by confession, there will be no occasion for it: sentence should be passed; the criminal should be given over to the penalty which is his due, not released. Accordingly, no one is eager for the acquittal of the guilty; it is not right to desire that, and so no one is ever compelled to deny. Well, you think the Christian a man of every crime, an enemy of the gods, of the emperors, of laws, of good morals, of all nature; yet you compel him to deny, that you may acquit him, which without him denial could not do. You play fast and loose with the laws. You wish him to deny his guilt, that you may, even against his will, bring him out blameless and free from all guilt in reference to the past! Whence is this strange perversity of your part? How is it you do not reflect that a spontaneous confession is greatly more worthy of credit than a confession of denial; or consider whether, when compelled to deny, a man's denial may not be in good faith, and whether a man may not, then and there, as soon as the trial is over, laugh at your hostility, a Christian as much as ever? Seeing then, that in everything you deal differently with us than with other criminals, bent upon the one object of taking from us our name (indeed, it is ours no more if we do what Christians never do), it is made perfectly clear that there is no crime of any kind in the case, but merely a name which a certain system, ever working against the truth, pursues to its enmity, doing this chiefly with the object of securing that men may have no desire to know for certain what they know for certain they are entirely ignorant of. Hence, too, it is that they believe about us things of which they have no proof, and they are disinclined to have them looked into, lest the charges, they would rather take on trust, are proved to have no foundation, that the name so hostile to that rival power - its crimes presumed, not proved - may be condemned simply on its own confession. So we are put to the torture if we confess, and we are punished if we deny, and if we deny we are acquitted, because all the contention is about a name. Finally, why do you read out of your tablet-lists that such a man is a Christian? Why not also that he is a murderer? And if a Christian is a murderer, is he not guilty, too, of incest, or any other vile thing you believe of us? In our case alone you are either ashamed or unwilling to mention the very names of our crimes - If to be called a Christian does not imply any crime, the name is surely very hateful, when that of itself is made a crime. Chapter 3 What are we to think of it, that most people so blindly knock their heads against the hatred of the Christian name; that when they bear favourable testimony to it they mingle with it abuse of the name he bears? A good man, says one, is Gaius Seius, only that he is a Christian; another, I am astonished that a wise man like Lucius should have suddenly become a Christian. Nobody thinks of considering whether Gaius is not good and Lucius wise, on this very account that he is a Christian; or a Christian for the reason that he is wise and good. They praise what they know, they abuse what they are ignorant of, and they mix their knowledge with their ignorance; though in fairness you should rather judge of what is unknown from what is known than what is known from what is unknown. Others, in the case of persons whom, before they took the name of Christian they had known as loose, and vile, and wicked, put on them a brand from the very thing which they praise. In the blindness of their hatred, they fall foul of their own approving judgment! What a woman she was! How wanton! What a youth he was! How profligate! How libidinous! - they have become Christians! So the hated name is given for the reformation of character. Some even barter away their comforts for that hatred, content to bear injury, if they are free at home from the object of their bitter enmity. The wife, now chaste, the husband, now no longer jealous, owner of his house; the son, now obedient, the father, who used to be so patient, disinherits; the servant, now faithful, the master, once so mild, commands away from his presence; it is a high offense for any one to be reformed by the name. Goodness is of less value than hatred of Christians. Well now, if there is this dislike of the name, what benefit can you attach to names? What accusation can you bring against mere designations, save that something in them is either barbarous, or unlucky, or scurrilous, or unchaste? But Christian, so far as the meaning of the word is concerned, is derived from anointing. Yes, and even when it is wrongly pronounced by you Chrestianus (for you do not even pronounce accurately the name you hate), it comes from sweetness and benignity. You hate, therefore, in the guiltless, even

guiltless name. But the special ground of dislike to the sect is, that it bears the name of its Founder. Is there anything new in a religious sect getting for its followers a designation from its master? Are not the philosophers called from the founders of their systems - Platonists, Epicureans, Pythagoreans? Are not the Stoics and Academics called also from the places in which they assembled and stationed themselves? And are not physicians named from Erasistratus, grammarians from Aristarchus, cooks even from Apicius? And yet the bearing of the name, transferred to the original institutor with whatever he has instituted, offends no one. No doubt, if it is proved that the sect is a bad one, and so its founder bad as well, that will prove that the name is bad and deserves our aversion, in respect to the character both of the sect and its author. Before, therefore, taking up a dislike to the name, it behooved you to consider the sect in the author, or the author in the sect. But now, without any sifting and knowledge of either, the mere name is made matter of accusation, the mere name is assailed, and a sound alone brings condemnation on its author both, while of both you are ignorant, because they have such and such a designation, not because they are convicted of anything wrong.

Chapter 4 And so, having made these remarks as it were by way of preface, that I might show in its true colors the injustice of the public hatred against us, I shall now take my stand on the plea of our blamelessness; and I shall not only refute the things which are objected to us, but I shall also retort them on the objectors, that in this way all may know that Christians are free from the very crimes they are so well aware present among themselves, that they may at the same time be put to the blush for their accusations against us - accusations which shall not say of the worst of men against the best, but now, as they will have it, against those who are only the worst fellows in sin. We shall reply to the accusation of all the various crimes we are said to be guilty of in secret, such as we find them committing in the light of day, and as being guilty of which we are held to be wicked, senseless, deserving of punishment, deserving of ridicule. But since, when our truth meets you successfully at all points, the authority of the laws as a last resort is set up against it, so that it is either said that their determinations are absolutely conclusive, or the necessity of obedience is, however unwillingly, preferred to the truth, I shall first, in this matter, grapple with you as with their chosen protectors. Now first, when you sternly lay it down in your sermons, "It is not lawful for you to exist, and with unhesitating rigour you enjoin this to be carried out, you exhibit the violence and unjust domination of mere tyranny, if you deny the thing to be lawful, simply on the ground that you think it to be unlawful, not because it ought to be. But if you would have it unlawful because it ought not to be lawful, without doubt that should have no permission of law which does harm; and on this ground, in fact, it is already determined that whatever is beneficial is legitimate. Well, if I have found what your law prohibits to be good, as you who has arrived at such a previous opinion, has it not lost its power to debar me from it, though that very thing were evil, it would justly forbid to me? If your law has gone wrong, it is of human origin, I think; it has not fallen from heaven. Is it wonderful that man should err in making a law, or come to his senses in rejecting it? Did not the Lacedæmonians amend the laws of Lycurgus himself, thereby inflicting such pain on their author that he shut himself up and doomed himself to death by starvation? Are you not yourselves every day, in your efforts to illumine the darkness of antiquity, cutting and hewing with the new axes of imperial rescripts and edicts, that whole ancient and rugged mass of your laws? Has not Severus, that most resolute of rulers, but yesterday repealed the ridiculous Papian laws which compelled people to have children before the Julian laws allow matrimony to be contracted, and that though the authority of age upon their side? There were laws, too, in old times, that parties against whom a decision had been given might be cut in pieces by their creditors; however, by common consent that cruelty was afterwards erased from the statutes, and the capital penalty turned into a brand of shame. By adopting the plan of confiscating a debtor's goods, it was sought rather to pour the blood in blushes over his face than to pour it out. How many laws lie hidden out of sight which still require to be reformed! For it is neither the number of their years nor the dignity of their maker that commends them, but simply that they are just; and therefore, when their injustice is recognized, they are deservedly condemned, even though they condemn. Why speak we of them as unjust? Nay, if they punish men well we call them irrational. But if they punish acts, why in our case do they punish acts solely on the ground of a name, while in others they must have them proved not from the name, but from the wrong done? I am a practiser of immorality (they say); why do they not inquire into it? I am an infant-killer; why do they not apply the torture to get from me the truth? I am guilty of crimes against the gods, against the Cæsars; why am I, who am able to clear myself, not allowed to be heard on my own behalf? No law forbids the sifting of the crimes which it prohibits, for a judge never inflicts righteous vengeance if he is not well assured that a crime has been committed; nor does a citizen render a true

subjection to the law, if he does not know the nature of the thing on which the punishment is inflicted. It is not enough that a law is just, nor that the judge should be convinced of its justice; those from whom obedience is exacted should have that conviction too. Nay, a law lies under strong suspicions which does not care to have itself tried and approved: it is a positively wicked law, if, unproved, it tyrannizes over men.

Chapter 5 To say a word about the laws of the kind to which we now refer, there was an old decree that no god should be consecrated by the emperor, first approved by the senate. Marcus Æmilius had experience of this in reference to his god Alburnus. And this makes for our case, that among you divinity is allotted at the judgment of human beings. Unless gods give satisfaction to men, there will be no deification for them: the god will have to propitiate the man. Tiberius accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favour of Christ. The senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected his proposal. Cæsar held to the same opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians. Consult your histories; you will there find that Caligula was the first who assailed with the imperial sword the Christian sect, making progress then especially at Rome in glory in having our condemnation hallowed by the hostility of such a wretch. For any one who knows him, can see that not except as being of singular excellence did anything bring on it Nero's condemnation. Domitian, too, a man of Nero's type in cruelty, tried his hand at persecution; but as he had something of the human in him, he soon put an end to what he had begun, even restoring again those whom he had banished. Such as these have always been our enemies, men unjust, impious, base, of whom even you yourselves have no good to say, the sufferers under whose sentence have been wont to restore. But among so many princes from that time to the present day, with anything of divine wisdom in them, point out a single persecutor of the Christian name. So far from that, we, on the contrary, bring you one who was their protector, as you will see by examining the letters of Marcus Aurelius, that most grave and good emperor, in which he bears his testimony that that Germanic drought was removed by the rains obtained through the prayers of the Christians who chanced to be fighting under him. And as he did not by public law remove from Christians their legal disabilities, yet in another way he put them openly aside, even adding a sentence of condemnation, of greater severity, against their accusers. What sort of laws are these which the impious alone execute against the just and the unjust, the vile, the bloody, the senseless, the insane? Which Trajan to some extent made naught by forbidding Christians to be sought after; which neither a Hadrian, though fond of searching into all things strange and new, nor Vespasian, though the subjugator of the Jews, nor a Pius, nor a Verus, ever enforced? It should surely be judged more natural for bad men to be eradicated by good princes as being their natural enemies, than by those of a spirit kindred with their own.

Chapter 6 I would now have these most religious protectors and vindicators of the laws and institutions of their fathers, tell me, in regard to their own fidelity and the honour, and submission they themselves show to the ancestral institutions, if they have departed from nothing - if they have in nothing gone out of the old paths - if they have not put aside whatsoever is most useful and necessary as rules of a virtuous life. What has become of their repressing expensive and ostentatious ways of living? Which forbade more than a hundred asses to be expended on a supper, and more than one fowl to be set on the table at a time, and that not a fatted one; which expelled a patrician from the senate on the serious ground, as it was counted, of aspiring to be too great, because he had acquired more than a hundred pounds of silver; which put down the theatres as quickly as they arose to debauch the manners of the people; which not permit the insignia of official dignities or of noble birth to be rashly or with impunity usurped? For I see the Centenarian suppers must now bear the name, not from the hundred asses, but from the hundred sesteria expended, and that mines of silver are made into dishes (it were little if this applied only to senators, and not to freedmen and even mere whip-spoilers). I see, too, that neither is a single theatre enough, nor are theatres unsheltered: no longer is it that immodest pleasure might not be torpid in the wintertime, the Lacedæmonians invented their woollen coverings for the plays. I see now no difference between the dress of matrons and prostitutes. In regard to women, indeed, the laws of your fathers, which used to be such an encouragement to modesty and sobriety, have also fallen into desuetude. A woman had yet known no gold upon her save on the finger, which, with the bridal ring, her husband had sacred to himself; when the abstinence of women from wine was carried so far, that a matron, for opening the comparative wine cellar, was starved to death by her friends - while in the times of Romulus, for merely tasting wine, Mecerinus killed his wife, and suffered nothing for the deed. With reference to this also, it was the custom of women to kiss their relatives, that they might be detected by their breath. Where is that happiness of married life, ever so

desirable, which distinguished our earlier manners, and as the result of which for about 600 years there was no us a single divorce? Now, women have every member of the body heavy laden with gold; wine-bibbing is so common among them, that the kiss is never offered with their will; and as for divorce, they long for it as though it were the natural consequence of marriage. The laws, too, your fathers in their wisdom had enacted concerning the very gods that you their most loyal children have rescinded. The consuls, by the authority of the senate, banished Father Bacchus and his mysteries not merely from the city, but from the whole of Italy. The consuls Piso and Gabinius, no Christian surely, forbade Serapis, and Isis, and Arpocrates, with their dogheaded friend, admission into the Capitol - in thus casting them out from the assembly of the gods - overthrow their altars, and expelled them from the country, being anxious to prevent the vices of their base and lascivious religion from spreading. These, you have restored, and conferred highest honours on them. What has come to your religion - of the veneration due by you to your ancestors? In your dress, in your food, in your style of life, in your opinions, and last of all in your very speech, you have renounced your progenitors. You are always praising antiquity, and yet every day you have novelties in your way of living. From your having failed to maintain what you should, you make it clear, that, while you abandon the good of your fathers, you retain and guard the things you ought not. Yet the very tradition of your fathers, which you still seem so faithfully to defend, and in which you find your principal matter of accusation against the Christians - I mean the zeal in the worship of the gods, the point in which antiquity has mainly erred - although you have rebuilt the altars of Serapis, now a Roman deity, and to Bacchus, now become a god of Italy, you offer up your orgies, - I shall in its place show that you despise, neglect, and overthrow, casting entirely aside the authority of the men of old. I go on meantime to reply to that infamous charge of secret crimes, clearing my way to things of open day. Chapter 7 In our wickedness, we are accused of observing a holy rite in which we kill a little child and then eat it; in which, after the feast, we practise incest, the dogs - our pimps, forsooth, overturning the lights and getting us the shamelessness of darkness for our impious lusts. This is what is constantly laid to our charge, and yet you take no pains to elicit the truth of what we have been so long accused. Either bring, then, the matter to the light of day if you believe it, or give it no credit as having never inquired into it. On the ground of your double dealing, we are entitled to lay it on you that there is no reality in the thing which you dare not expiscate. You impose on the executioner, in the case of Christians, a duty the very opposite of expiscation: he is not to make them confess what they do, but to make them confess what they are. We date the origin of our religion, as we have mentioned before, from the reign of Tiberius. Truth and the hatred of truth come into our world together. As soon as truth appears, it is regarded as an enemy. It has as many foes as there are strangers to it: the Jews, as was to be looked for, from a spirit of rivalry; the soldiers, out of a desire to extort money; our very domestics, by their nature. We are daily beset by foes, we are daily betrayed; we are oftentimes surprised in our meetings and congregations. Whoever happened withal upon an infant wailing, according to a common story? Whoever kept for the judge, just as he had found them, the gory mouths of Cyclops and Sirens? Did they find any traces of uncleanness in their wives? Where is the man who, when he had discovered such atrocities, did not tell them; or, in the act of dragging the culprits before the judge, was bribed into silence? If we always keep our secrets, when were our proceedings made known to the world? Nay, by whom could they be made known? Not, surely, by the parties themselves; even from the very idea of the thing, the fealty of silence being ever due to mysteries. The Samothracian and Eleusinian make no disclosures - how much more will silence be kept in regard to such as are forbidden their unveiling, to call forth punishment from man at once, while wrath divine is kept in store for the future? If, then, Christians are not themselves the publishers of their crime, it follows of course it must be strangers. And how have they their knowledge, when it is also a universal custom in religious initiations to keep the profane aloof, and beware of witnesses, unless it be that those who are so wicked have less fear than their neighbors? Every one knows that sort of thing rumour is. It is one of your own sayings, that among all evils, none flies so fast as rumour. Why is rumour such an evil thing? Is it because it is fleet? Is it because it carries information? Or is it because it is in the highest degree mendacious? - a thing, not even when it brings some truth to us, without a taint of falsehood. It is detracting, or adding, or changing from the simple fact? Nay more, it is the very law of its being to continue only while it lies, and to live but so long as there is no proof; for when the proof is given, it ceases to exist; and, as having done its work of merely spreading a report, it delivers up a fact, and is henceforth held to be a fact, and is called a fact. And then no one says, for instance, They say that it took place at Rome, or, There is a rumour that he has obtained a province, but, He has got a province, and, It took place at Rome. Rumour, the very designation

uncertainty, has no place when a thing is certain. Does any but a fool put his trust in it? For a wise man never believes the dubious. Everybody knows, however zealously it is spread abroad, on whatever strength of asseverations rests, that some time or other from some one fountain it has its origin. Thence it must creep into propagating tongues and ears; and a small seminal blemish so darkens all the rest of the story, that no one can determine whether from which it first came forth, planted the seed of falsehood, as often happens, from a spirit of opposition, or from suspicious judgment, or from a confirmed, nay, in the case of some, an inborn, delight in lying. It is well that time brings all to light, as your proverbs and sayings testify, by a provision of Nature, which has so appointed things nothing long is hidden, even though rumour has not disseminated it. It is just then as it should be, that fame for so long a period has been alone aware of the crimes of Christians. This is the witness you bring against us - one that never been able to prove the accusation it some time or other sent abroad, and at last by mere continuance made a settled opinion in the world; so that I confidently appeal to Nature herself, ever true, against those who groundlessly hold that such things are to be credited. Chapter 8 See now, we set before you the reward of these enormities. The promise of eternal life. Hold it meanwhile as your own belief. I ask you, then, whether, so believing, you think it worth attaining with a conscience such as you will have. Come, plunge your knife into the babe, enemy of none of none, child of all; or if that is another's work, simply take your place beside a human being dying before he has really lived, await the departure of the lately given soul, receive the fresh young blood, saturate your bread with it, freely partake. The while as you recline at table, take note of the places which your mother and your sister occupy, mark them well, so that when the dog-made darkness has fallen on you, you may make no mistake, for you will have a crime - unless you perpetrate a deed of incest. Initiated and sealed into things like these, you have life everlasting. Tell me, I pray you, is eternity worth it? If it is not, then these things are not to be credited. Even if you had the belief, I deny the will; and even if you had the will, I deny the possibility. Why then can others do it, if you cannot? Why cannot you, if others can? I suppose we are of a different nature - are we Cynopæ or Sciapodes? You are a man yourself as well as the Christian: if you cannot do it, you ought not to believe it of others. For a Christian is a man as well as you. But the ignorant, forsooth, are deceived and imposed on. They were quite unaware of anything of the kind being imputed to Christians, or they would certainly have looked into it for themselves and searched the matter out. Instead of that, it is the custom for persons wishing initiation into sacred rites, I think, to go first of all to the master of them, that he may explain what preparations are to be made. Then, in that case, no doubt he would say, You must have a child still of tender age, that knows not what it is to die, and carry it under your knife; bread, too, to collect the gushing blood; in addition to these, candlesticks, and lamps, and do with tid-bits to draw them on to the extinguishing of the lights: above all things, you will require to bring your mother and your sister with you. But what if mother and sister are unwilling? Or if there be neither the one nor the other? What if there are Christians with no Christian relatives? He will not be counted, I suppose, a true follower of Christ, who has not a brother or a son. And what now, if these things are all in store for them without their knowledge? At least afterwards they come to know them; and they bear with them, and pardon them. They fear, it may be so, they have to pay for it if they let the secret out: nay, but they will rather in that case have every claim to protection; they will even prefer, one might think, dying by their own hand, to living under the burden of such a dreadful knowledge. Admit that they have this fear; yet why do they still persevere? For it is plain enough that you will have no desire to continue what you would never have been, if you had had previous knowledge of it. Chapter 9 I may refute more thoroughly these charges, I will show that in part openly, in part secretly, practices prevail among you which have led you perhaps to credit similar things about us. Children were openly sacrificed in Africa to Saturn lately as the proconsulship of Tiberius, who exposed to public gaze the priests suspended on the sacred trees, overshadowing their temple - so many crosses on which the punishment which justice craved overtook their criminals; soldiers of our country still can testify who did that very work for that proconsul. And even now that sacred crime still continues to be done in secret. It is not only Christians, you see, who despise you; for all that you do there neither any crime thoroughly and abidingly eradicated, nor does any of your gods reform his ways. When Saturn spared his own children, he was not likely to spare the children of others; whom indeed the very parents themselves in the habit of offering, gladly responding to the call which was made on them, and keeping the little ones pleased on the occasion, that they might not die in tears. At the same time, there is a vast difference between homicide and parricide. A more advanced age was sacrificed to Mercury in Gaul. I hand over the Tauric fables to their own th

Why, even in that most religious city of the pious descendants of Æneas, there is a certain Jupiter whom in the they lave with human blood. It is the blood of a beast-fighter, you say. Is it less, because of that, the blood of a man? Or is it viler blood because it is from the veins of a wicked man? At any rate it is shed in murder. O Jove, yourself a Christian, and in truth only son of your father in his cruelty! But in regard to child murder, as it does not matter whether it is committed for a sacred object, or merely at one's own self-impulse - although there is a great difference, as we have said, between parricide and homicide - I shall turn to the people generally. How many, then, of those crowding around and gaping for Christian blood, - how many even of your rulers, notable for their justice to you and for their severe measures against us, may I charge in their own consciences with the sin of putting the offspring to death? As to any difference in the kind of murder, it is certainly the more cruel way to kill by drowning or by exposure to cold and hunger and dogs. A maturer age has always preferred death by the sword. In our case being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the fœtus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives from other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in its seed. As to meals of blood and such tragic dishes, read - I am not sure if it is told (it is in Herodotus, I think) - how blood taken from the arms, and tasted by both parties, has been the tie of bond among some nations. I am not sure what it was that was tasted in the time of Catiline. They say, too, that among some Scythian tribes the dead are eaten by their friends. But I am going far from home. At this day, among our people blood consecrated to Bellona, blood drawn from a punctured thigh and then partaken of, seals initiation into the cult of that goddess. Those, too, who at the gladiator shows, for the cure of epilepsy, quaff with greedy thirst the blood of criminals slain in the arena, as it flows fresh from the wound, and then rush off - to whom do they belong? Those who make meals on the flesh of wild beasts at the place of combat - who have keen appetites for bear and stag - whose in the struggle was bedewed with the blood of the man whom it lacerated: that stag rolled itself in the gladiator's gore. The entrails of the very bears, loaded with as yet undigested human viscera, are in great request. And you wonder at men rifting up man-fed flesh? If you partake of food like this, how do your repasts differ from those you accuse the Christians of? And do those, who, with savage lust, seize on human bodies, do less because they devour the living, than they less the pollution of human blood on them because they only lick up what is to turn into blood? They make no distinction is plain, not so much of infants, as of grown-up men. Blush for your vile ways before the Christians, who have no use of the blood of animals at their meals of simple and natural food; who abstain from things strangled and that die a violent death, for no other reason than that they may not contract pollution, so much as from blood secreted in the viscera. To clinch the matter with a single example, you tempt Christians with sausages of blood, just because you are perfectly aware that the thing by which you thus try to get them to transgress they hold unlawful. And how unreasonable is to believe that those, of whom you are convinced that they regard with horror the idea of tasting the blood of oxen, are more eager after blood of men; unless, perhaps, you have tried it, and found it sweeter to the taste! Nay, in fact, there is here a test you should apply to discover Christians, as well as the fire-pan and the censer. They should be proved by their appetite for human blood, as well as by their refusal to offer sacrifice; just as otherwise they should be affirmed to be free of Christianity by their refusal to taste of blood, as by their sacrificing; and there would be no want of blood of men, amply supplied as that would be in the trial and condemnation of prisoners. Then who are more given to the crime of incest than those who have enjoyed the instruction of Jupiter himself? Ctesias tells us that the Persians have illicit intercourse with their mothers. The Macedonians, too, are suspected on this point; for on first hearing the tragedy of Oedipus they made mirth of the incest-doer's grief, exclaiming, Even now we should reflect what opportunity there is for mistakes leading to incestuous comminglings - your promiscuous looseness in the materials. You first of all expose your children, that they may be taken up by any compassionate passer-by, when they are quite unknown; or you give them away, to be adopted by those who will do better to them the part of parents. Well, some time or other, all memory of the alienated progeny must be lost; and when once a mistake has been made, the transmission of incest thence will still go on - the race and the crime creeping on together. Then, further, where are you - at home, abroad, over the seas - your lust is an attendant, whose general indulgence, or even its indulgence in the most limited scale, may easily and unwittingly anywhere beget children, so that in this way a progeny scarcely about in the commerce of life may have intercourse with those who are their own kin, and have no notion that there is any incest in the case. A persevering and steadfast chastity has protected us from anything like this: keeping a

from adulteries and all post-matrimonial unfaithfulness, we are not exposed to incestuous mishaps. Some of us matters still more secure, beat away from them entirely the power of sensual sin, by a virgin continence, still be in this respect when they are old. If you would but take notice that such sins as I have mentioned prevail among you would lead you to see that they have no existence among Christians. The same eyes would tell you of both facts: two blindnesses are apt to go together; so that those who do not see what is, think they see what is not. I shall not say it to be so in everything. But now let me speak of matters which are more clear.

Chapter 10 You do not worship your gods, as you say; and you do not offer sacrifices for the emperors. Well, we do not offer sacrifice for others, for the same reason that we do not for ourselves - namely, that your gods are not at all the objects of our worship. So we are not accused of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief ground of charge against us - nay, it is the sum-total of our offence; and it is worthy then of being inquired into, if neither prejudice nor injustice be the judge, the one of which has no idea of discovering the truth, and the other simply and at once rejects it. We do not worship your gods because we know that there are no such beings. This, therefore, is what you should do: you should call on us to demonstrate their non-existence, and thereby prove that they have no claim to adoration; for only if your gods were truly so, would there be any obligation to render divine homage to them. And punishment even were due to Christians if it were made plain that those to whom they refused all worship were indeed divine. But you say, They are gods; we protest and appeal from yourselves to your knowledge; let that judge us; let that condemn us, if it can deny that these gods of yours were but men. If even it venture to deny that, it will be confuted by its own books of antiquities from which it has got its information about them, bearing witness to this day, as they plainly do, both of the cities in which they were born, and the countries in which they have left traces of their exploits, as well as where also they proved to have been buried. Shall I now, therefore, go over them one by one, so numerous and so various, neither barbarian, Grecian, Roman, foreign, captive and adopted, private and common, male and female, rural and urban, military? It were useless even to hunt out all their names: so I may content myself with a compend; and this not for your information, but that you may have what you know brought to your recollection, for undoubtedly you act as if you had forgotten all about them. No one of your gods is earlier than Saturn: from him you trace all your deities, even those of higher rank and better known. What, then, can be proved of the first, will apply to those that follow. So then, as books give us information, neither the Greek Diodorus or Thallus, neither Cassius Severus or Cornelius Tacitus nor any writer upon sacred antiquities, have ventured to say that Saturn was any but a man: so far as the question depends on facts, I find none more trustworthy than those - that in Italy itself we have the country in which, after his expeditions, and after having partaken of Attic hospitalities, Saturn settled, obtaining cordial welcome from Janus, as the Salii will have it, Janis. The mountain on which he dwelt was called Saturnius; the city he founded is called Saturnia to this day; last of all, the whole of Italy, after having borne the name of Oenotria, was called Saturnia in his honour. He first gave you the art of writing, and a stamped coinage, and thence it is he presides over the public treasury. But if Saturn were a man, he had undoubtedly a human origin; and having a human origin, he was not the offspring of heaven and earth. As his parents were unknown, it was not unnatural that he should be spoken of as the son of the elements from which we might all seem to spring. For who does not speak of heaven and earth as father and mother, in sort of way of veneration and honour? Or from the custom which prevails among us of saying that persons of vantage, no knowledge, or who make a sudden appearance, have fallen from the skies? In this way it came about that Saturn was everywhere a sudden and unlooked-for deity, got everywhere the name of the Heaven-born. For even the common people, whose stock is unknown, sons of earth. I say nothing of how men in these rude times were wont to act, when they were impressed by the look of any stranger happening to appear among them, as though it were divine, since even philosophers and men of culture make gods of those whom, a day or two before, they acknowledged to be dead men by their punishment. Let these notices of Saturn, brief as they are, suffice. It will thus also be proved that Jupiter is as certainly a man, as from a man he sprung; and that one after another the whole swarm is mortal like the primary deity.

Chapter 11 And since, as you dare not deny that these deities of yours once were men, you have taken it on you to say that they were made gods after their decease, let us consider what necessity there was for this. In the first place, we must concede the existence of one higher God - a certain wholesale dealer in divinity, who has made gods of men, as they could neither have assumed a divinity which was not theirs, nor could any but one himself possessing it have conferred it on them. If there was no one to make gods, it is vain to dream of gods being made when thus you have no god-maker. Most certainly, if they could have deified themselves, with a higher state at their command, they need

have been men. If, then, there be one who is able to make gods, I turn back to an examination of any reason that for making gods at all; and I find no other reason than this, that the great God has need of their ministrations and aids in performing the offices of Deity. But first it is an unworthy idea that He should need the help of a man, and in fact a dead man, when, if He was to be in want of this assistance from the dead, He might more fittingly have chosen some one a god at the beginning. Nor do I see any place for his action. For this entire world-mass - whether self-existent and uncreated, as Pythagoras maintains, or brought into being by a creator's hands, as Plato holds - manifestly, once for all in its original construction, disposed, and furnished, and ordered, and supplied with a government of perfect wisdom. That cannot be imperfect which has made all perfect. There was nothing waiting on Saturn and his race to do. Men will make fools of themselves if they refuse to believe that from the very first rain poured down from the sky, and stars gleamed, and light shone, and thunders roared, and Jove himself dreaded no lightnings you put in his hands; that in like manner before Bacchus, and Ceres, and Minerva, nay before the first whoever that was, every kind of fruit burst forth plentifully from the bosom of the earth, for nothing provided for the support and sustenance of man could be introduced after his entrance on the stage of being. Accordingly, these necessities of life are said to have been discovered, not created. But the thing you discover existed before; and that which had a pre-existence must be regarded as belonging not to him who discovered it, but to him who made it. Of course it had a being before it could be found. But if, on account of his being the discoverer of the vine, Bacchus is raised to godship, Lucullus, who first introduced the cherry from Pontus into Italy, has not been fairly dealt with; as the discoverer of a new fruit, he has not, as though he were its creator, been awarded divine honours. When the universe existed from the beginning, thoroughly furnished with its system working under certain laws for the performance of its functions, there is, in this respect, an entire absence of all reason for electing humanity to divinity; for the positions and powers which you have assigned to your deities have been from the beginning precisely what they would have been, although you had never deified them. But you turn to another reason, telling us that the conferring of deity was a way of rewarding worth. And hence you grant, I conclude, that the god-making God is a transcendent righteousness - one who will neither rashly, improperly, nor needlessly bestow a reward so great. Have you then consider whether the merits of your deities are of a kind to have raised them to the heavens, and rather to have sunk them down into lowest depths of Tartarus - the place which you regard, with many, as the prison-house of infernal punishments. For into this dread place are wont to be cast all who offend against filial piety, and such as are guilty of incest with sisters, and seducers of wives, and ravishers of virgins, and boy-polluters, men of furious tempers, and murderers, and thieves, and deceivers; all, in short, who tread in the footsteps of the gods, not one of whom you can prove free from crime or vice, save by denying that they had ever a human existence; as you cannot deny that, you have those foul blots also as an added reason for not believing that they were made afterwards. For if you rule for the very purpose of punishing such deeds; if every virtuous man among you rejects correspondence, converse, and intimacy with the wicked and base, while, on the other hand, the high God has granted their mates to a share of His majesty, on what ground is it that you thus condemn those whose fellow-actors you honour? Your goodness is an affront in the heavens. Deify your vilest criminals, if you would please your gods. You honour them by giving divine honours to their fellows. But to say no more about a way of acting so unworthy, there have been many virtuous, and pure, and good. Yet how many of these nobler men you have left in the regions of doom! As Socrates renowned for his wisdom, Aristides for his justice, Themistocles for his warlike genius, Alexander for his sublime soul, Polycrates for his good fortune, Crassus for his wealth, Demosthenes for his eloquence. Which of these gods of yours is more remarkable for gravity and wisdom than Cato, more just and warlike than Scipio? Which of them more magnanimous than Pompey, more prosperous than Sylla, of greater wealth than Crassus, more eloquent than Cicero? Much better it would have been for the God Supreme to have waited that He might have taken such men as these for His heavenly associates, prescient as He must have surely been of their worthier character! He was in a hurry, I suppose, and straightway shut heaven's gates; and now He must surely feel ashamed at these worthies murmuring over Him in the regions below.

Chapter 12 But I pass from these remarks, for I know and I am going to show what your gods are, by showing what they are. In reference, then, to these, I see only names of dead men of ancient times; I hear of their stories; I recognize sacred rites founded on mere myths. As to the actual images, I regard them as simply pieces of matter akin to the vessels and utensils in common use among us, or even undergoing in their consecration a change from these useful articles at the hands of reckless art, which in the transforming process treats them with

contempt, nay, in the very act commits sacrilege; so that it might be no slight solace to us in all our punishment suffering as we do because of these same gods, that in their making they suffer as we do themselves. You put men on crosses and stakes: what image is not formed from the clay in the first instance, set on cross and stake? The image of your god is first consecrated on the gibbet. You tear the sides of Christians with your claws; but in the case of your own gods, axes, and planes, and rasps are put to work more vigorously on every member of the body. We lay the block; before the lead, and the glue, and the nails are put in requisition, your deities are headless. We are exposed to the wild beasts, while you attach them to Bacchus, and Cybele, and Cælestis. We are burned in the flames; while they are in their original lump. We are condemned to the mines; from these your gods originate. We are banished to islands; in islands it is a common thing for your gods to have their birth or die. If it is in this way a deity is made, it will follow that as many as are punished are deified, and tortures will have to be declared divinities. But plain is these objects of your worship have no sense of the injuries and disgraces of their consecrating, as they are unconscious of the honours paid to them. O impious words! O blasphemous reproaches! Gnash your teeth upon us in maddened rage against us - you are the persons, no doubt, who censured a certain Seneca speaking of your statues with much greater length and far more sharply! In a word, if we refuse our homage to statues and frigid images, the counterpart of their dead originals, with which hawks, and mice, and spiders are so well acquainted, does it not seem a praise instead of penalty, that we have rejected what we have come to see is error? We cannot surely be made to injure those who we are certain are nonentities. What does not exist, is in its nonexistence secure from suffering.

Chapter 13 But they are gods to us, you say. And how is it, then, that in utter inconsistency with this, you are convicted of impious, sacrilegious, and irreligious conduct to them, neglecting those you imagine to exist, destroying those who are the objects of your fear, making mock of those whose honour you avenge? See now if I go beyond this. First, indeed, seeing you worship, some one god, and some another, of course you give offense to those you do not worship. You cannot continue to give preference to one without slighting another, for selection implies rejection. You despise, therefore, those whom you thus reject; for in your rejection of them, it is plain you have no dread of giving them offense. For, as we have already shown, every god depended on the decision of the senate for his godhead; was he whom man in his own counsels did not wish to be so, and thereby condemned. The family deities you do not exercise a domestic authority over, pledging them, selling them, changing them - making sometimes a cooking pot of Saturn, a firepan of a Minerva, as one or other happens to be worn down, or broken in its long sacred use, or as a family head feels the pressure of some more sacred home necessity. In like manner, by public law you disgrace your gods, putting them in the auction-catalogue, and making them a source of revenue. Men seek to get the Capitulum, you seek to get the herb market, under the voice of the crier, under the auction spear, under the registration of the *quæstor*. Deity is struck off and farmed out to the highest bidder. But indeed lands burdened with tribute are of no value; men under the assessment of a poll-tax are less noble; for these things are the marks of servitude. In the case of the gods, on the other hand, the sacredness is great in proportion to the tribute which they yield; nay, the more sacred is a god, the larger is the tax he pays. Majesty is made a source of gain. Religion goes about the tavern begging. You demand a price for the privilege of standing on temple ground, for access to the sacred services; no gratuitous knowledge of your divinities permitted - you must buy their favours with a price. What honours in return do you render to them that you do not render to the dead? You have temples in the one case just as in the other; have altars in the one case as in the other. Their statues have the same dress, the same insignia. As the dead are buried in his age, his art, his occupation, so it is with the deity. In what respect does the funeral feast differ from the feast of Jupiter? Or the bowl of the gods from the ladle of the manes? Or the undertaker from the soothsayer, as in the former latter personage also attends upon the dead? With perfect propriety you give divine honours to your departed gods as you worship them in life. The gods will count themselves indebted to you; nay, it will be matter of high rejoicing among them that their masters are made their equals. But when you adore Larentina, a public prostitute - I could have wished that it might at least have been Lais or Phryne - among your Junos, and Cereses, and Dianas; when you add to your Pantheon Simon Magus, giving him a statue and the title of Holy God; when you make an infamous courtier a member of the sacred synod, although your ancient deities are in reality no better, they will still think themselves affronted by you, that the privilege antiquity conferred on them alone, has been allowed to others.

Chapter 14 I wish now to say a few words of your sacred rites; and I pass no censure on your sacrificing, when you offer the worn-out, the scabbed, the corrupted, when you cut off from the fat and the sound the useless parts, such as the head and the hoofs, which in your h

would have assigned to the slaves or the dogs; when of the title of Hercules you do not lay a third upon his altars (but disposed rather to praise your wisdom in rescuing something from being lost); but turning to your books, from which you get your training in wisdom and the nobler duties of life, what utterly ridiculous things I find!· that for Trojans and Greeks the gods fought among themselves like pairs of gladiators; that Venus was wounded by a man, because she would rescue her son Æneas when he was in peril of his life from the same Diomedes; that Mars was almost wasted by thirteen months' imprisonment; that Jupiter was saved by a monster's aid from suffering the same violence at the hands of the other gods; that he now laments the fate of Sarpedon, now foully makes love to his own sister, recounting to her) former mistresses, now for a long time past not so dear as she. After this, what poet is not found copying the example of his chief, to be a disgracer of the gods? One gives Apollo to king Admetus to tend his sheep; another assigns out the building labours of Neptune to Laomedon. A well-known lyric poet, too · Pindar, I mean · sings of Æsculapius deservedly stricken with lightning for his greed in practising wrongfully his art. A wicked deed it was of Jupiter · that he hurled the bolt · unnatural to his grandson, and exhibiting envious feeling to the Physician. Things like these should not be made public if they are true; and if false, they should not be fabricated among people professing respect for religion. Nor indeed do either tragic or comic writers shrink from setting forth the gods as the origin of all family calamities and sins. I do not dwell on the philosophers, contenting myself with a reference to Socrates, who in contempt of the gods, was in the habit of swearing by an oak, and a goat, and a dog. In fact, for this very thing Socrates was condemned to death, that he overthrew the worship of the gods. Plainly, at one time as well as another, that is, always truth is disliked. However, when rueing their judgment, the Athenians inflicted punishment on his accusers, and set up a golden image of him in a temple, the condemnation was in the very act rescinded, and was restored to its former value. Diogenes, too, makes utter mock of Hercules and the Roman cynic Varro brings forth three hundred Joves, or Jupiters they should be called, all headless. Chapter 15 Others of your writers, in their wantonness, even minister to your pleasures by vilifying the gods. Examine those charming farces of your Lenæan Hostilii, whether in the jokes and tricks it is the buffoons or the deities which afford you merriment; such farces mean as Anubis the Adulterer, and Luna of the masculine gender, and Diana under the lash, and the reading that Jupiter deceased, and the three famishing Herculesees held up to ridicule. Your dramatic literature, too, depicts the vileness of your gods. The Sun mourns his offspring cast down from heaven, and you are full of glee; Cybele is the scornful swain, and you do not blush; you brook the stage recital of Jupiter's misdeeds, and the shepherd Juno, Venus, and Minerva. Then, again, when the likeness of a god is put on the head of an ignominious and infamous wretch, when one impure and trained up for the art in all effeminacy, represents a Minerva or a Hercules, is not the majesty of your gods insulted, and their deity dishonored? Yet you not merely look on, but applaud. You are, I think, more devout in the arena, where after the same fashion your deities dance on human blood, on the pollutions and inflicted punishments, as they act their themes and stories, doing their turn for the wretched criminals, except that these, too, often put on divinity and actually play the very gods. We have seen in our day a representation of the mutilation of Attis, that famous god of Pessinus, and a man burnt alive as Hercules. We have made merry amid the ludicrous cruelties of the noonday exhibition, at Mercury examining the bodies of the dead with his hot iron; we have witnessed Jove's brother, mallet in hand, dragging out the corpses of the gladiators. But who can go into every detail of this sort? If by such things as these the honour of deity is assailed, if they go to blot out every trace of its majesty, we must explain them by the contempt in which the gods are held, alike by those who actually do them and those for whose enjoyment they are done. This it will be said, however, is all in sport. But if I add · it is what all men know and will admit as readily to be the fact · that in the temples adulteries are arranged, that at the altars pimping is practised, that often in the houses of the temple-keepers and priests, under the sacrificial fillets, and the sacred hats, and the purple robes, amid the fumes of incense, deeds of licentiousness are done, I am not sure but you have more reason to complain of you than of Christians. It is certainly among the votaries of your religion that the perpetrators of sacrilege are always found, for Christians do not enter your temples even in the day-time. Perhaps too would be spoilers of them, if they worshipped in them. What then do they worship, since their objects of worship are different from yours? Already indeed it is implied, as the corollary from their rejection of the lie, that they render homage to the truth; nor continue longer in an error which they have given up in the very fact of recognizing it to be an error. Take this in first of all, and when we have offered a preliminary refutation of some false opinions, go on to derive from it our entire religious system. Chapter 16 For, like some others, you are under the delusion that our

an ass's head. Cornelius Tacitus first put this notion into people's minds. In the fifth book of his histories, beginning the (narrative of the) Jewish war with an account of the origin of the nation; and theorizing at his pleasure about the origin, as well as the name and the religion of the Jews, he states that having been delivered, or rather, in his opinion, expelled from Egypt, in crossing the vast plains of Arabia, where water is so scanty, they were in extremity from thirst; but taking the guidance of the wild asses, which it was thought might be seeking water after feeding, they discovered a fountain, and thereupon in their gratitude they consecrated a head of this species of animal. And as Christianity is nearly allied to Judaism, from this, I suppose, it was taken for granted that we too are devoted to the worship of the same image. But the said Cornelius Tacitus (the very opposite of tacit in telling lies) informs us in the work already mentioned, that when Cneius Pompeius captured Jerusalem, he entered the temple to see the Jewish religion, but found no image there. Yet surely if worship was rendered to any visible object, the very place for its exhibition would be the shrine; and that all the more that the worship, however unreasonable, had no need to fear outside beholders. For entrance to the holy place was permitted to the priests alone, while all vision was forbidden to others by an outspread curtain. You will not, however, deny that all beasts of burden, and not partly of them, but the animals entire, are with their goddess Epona objects of worship with you. It is this, perhaps, which displeases you in us, that while your worship here is universal, we do homage only to the ass. Then, if any of you render superstitious adoration to the cross, in that adoration he is sharer with us. If you offer homage to a piece of wood at all, it matters little what it is like when the substance is the same: it is of no consequence the form, if you have the very body of the god. And yet how far does the Athenian Pallas differ from the stock of the cross, or Pharian Ceres as she is put up uncarved to sale, a mere rough stake and piece of shapeless wood? Every standing upright position is a portion of the cross; we render our adoration, if you will have it so, to a god entire and complete. We have shown before that your deities are derived from shapes modelled from the cross. But you also adore your victories, for in your trophies the cross is the heart of the trophy. The camp religion of the Romans is all through worship of the standards, a setting the standards above all gods. Well, as those images decking out the standards are ornaments of crosses. All those hangings of your standards and banners are robes of crosses. I praise your zeal, you would not consecrate crosses unclothed and unadorned. Others, again, certainly with more information and greater verisimilitude, believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the sun of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, also under pretence sometimes of worshipping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sun-day to recreation from a far different reason than Sun-worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day to ease and luxury, though they too go far away from Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant. But lately a new edition of our god has been given to the world in that great city: it originated with a certain vile man who was willing to hire himself out to cheat the wild beasts, and who exhibited a picture with this inscription: The God of the Christians born of an ass. He had the ears of an ass, was hoofed in one foot, carried a book, and wore a toga. Both the nature of the figure gave us amusement. But our opponents ought straightway to have done homage to this bifurcated divinity: they have acknowledged gods dog-headed and lion-headed, with horn of buck and ram, with goat-like loins, with legs, with wings sprouting from back or foot. These things we have discussed ex abundanti, that we might not be unwillingly to pass by any rumor against us unrefuted. Having thoroughly cleared ourselves, we turn now to an examination of what our religion really is. Chapter 17 The object of our worship is the One God, He who by His commanding and arranging wisdom, His mighty power, brought forth from nothing this entire mass of our world, with all its array of elements, bodies, spirits, for the glory of His majesty; whence also the Greeks have bestowed on it the name of God. The eye cannot see Him, though He is (spiritually) visible. He is incomprehensible, though in grace He is manifest. He is beyond our utmost thought, though our human faculties conceive of Him. He is therefore equally real and greater than that which, in the ordinary sense, can be seen and handled and conceived, is inferior to the eyes by which it is seen, and the hands by which it is touched, and the faculties by which it is discovered; but that which is infinite is known only to itself. This it is which gives some notion of God, while yet beyond all our conceptions - our very incapacity of fully grasping Him affords us the idea of what He really is. He is presented to our minds in His transcendent greatness, as at once known and unknown. And this is the crowning guilt of men, that they will not recognize One, of whom they cannot possibly be ignorant. Would you have the proof from the works of His hands?

numerous and so great, which both contain you and sustain you, which minister at once to your enjoyment, and with awe; or would you rather have it from the testimony of the soul itself? Though under the oppressive bondage of the body, though led astray by depraving customs, though enervated by lusts and passions, though in slavery to fate, yet, whenever the soul comes to itself, as out of a surfeit, or a sleep, or a sickness, and attains something of its natural soundness, it speaks of God; using no other word, because this is the peculiar name of the true God. Chapter 17 Great and good · Which may God give, are the words on every lip. It bears witness, too, that God is judge, except God sees, and, I commend myself to God, and, God will repay me. O noble testimony of the soul by nature Chapter 18 too, in using such words as these, it looks not to the Capitol, but to the heavens. It knows that there is the throne of the living God, as from Him and from thence itself came down. Chapter 18 But, that we might attain an ampler authoritative knowledge at once of Himself, and of His counsels and will, God has added a written revelation for the benefit of every one whose heart is set on seeking Him, that seeking he may find, and finding believe, and believe obey. For from the first He sent messengers into the world · men whose stainless righteousness made them worthy of the Most High, and to reveal Him · men abundantly endowed with the Holy Spirit, that they might proclaim that there is one God only who made all things, who formed man from the dust of the ground (for He is the true Prometheus) in order to the world by arranging the seasons and their course) · these have further set before us the proofs He has of His majesty in His judgments by floods and fires, the rules appointed by Him for securing His favour, as well as retribution in store for the ignoring, forsaking and keeping them, as being about at the end of all to adjudge His worshippers to everlasting life, and the wicked to the doom of fire at once without ending and without break, raising again all the dead from the beginning, reforming and renewing them with the object of awarding either recompense or punishment to these things were with us, too, the theme of ridicule. We are of your stock and nature: men are made, not born Christians. The preachers of whom we have spoken are called prophets, from the office which belongs to them of predicting the future. Their words, as well as the miracles which they performed, that men might have faith in the divine authority, we have still in the literary treasures they have left, and which are open to all. Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, the most learned of his race, a man of vast acquaintance with all literature, emulating, I imagine, the book enthusiasm of Pisistratus, among other remains of the past which either their antiquity or something of peculiar interest made famous, at the suggestion of Demetrius Phalereus, who was renowned above all grammarians of his age to whom he had committed the management of these things, applied to the Jews for their writings · I mean the scriptures peculiar to them and in their tongue, which they alone possessed, for from themselves, as a people dear to God for their fathers' sake, their prophets had ever sprung, and to them they had ever spoken. Now in ancient times the people called Jews bare the name of Hebrews, and so both their writings and their speech were Hebrew. But that the understanding of their books might not be wanting, this also the Jews supplied to Ptolemy; for they gave him seventy-two interpreters, men whom the philosopher Menedemus, the well-known assertor of a Providence, regarded with respect as scholars of the highest views. The same account is given by Aristæus. So the king left these works unlocked to all, in the Greek language. On this day, at the temple of Serapis, the libraries of Ptolemy are to be seen, with the identical Hebrew originals in their place. The Jews, too, read them publicly. Under a tribute-liberty, they are in the habit of going to hear them even on the Sabbath. Whoever gives ear will find God in them; whoever takes pains to understand, will be compelled to believe. Chapter 19 Their high antiquity, first of all, claims authority for these writings. With you, too, it is a kind of religion to demand belief on this very ground. Well, all the substances, all the materials, the origins, classes, and contents of your most ancient writings, even most nations and cities illustrious in the records of the past and not less for their antiquity in books of annals · the very forms of your letters, those revealers and custodiers of events, not only (I think I speak still within the mark), your very gods themselves, your very temples and oracles, and sacred rites, are less ancient than the work of a single prophet, in whom you have the thesaurus of the entire Jewish religion, and which is therefore too of ours. If you happen to have heard of a certain Moses, I speak first of him: he is as far back as Argive Inachus; by nearly four hundred years · only seven less · he precedes Danaus, your most ancient name, and antedates by a millennium the death of Priam. I might affirm, too, that he is five hundred years earlier than Homer, who have supporters of that view. The other prophets also, though of later date, are, even the most recent of them, as old as the first of your philosophers, and legislators, and historians. It is not so much the difficulty of the subject, as its vastness, that stands in the way of a statement of the grounds on which these statements rest; the matter is not so arduous as it would be tedious. It would require the anxious study of many books, and the finger

reckoning. The histories of the most ancient nations, such as the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Ph-nicians, would have to be ransacked; the men of these various nations who have information to give, would have to be called in as witnesses; Manetho the Egyptian, and Berosus the Chaldean, and Hieromus the Ph-nician king of Tyre; their successors the Eusebius the Mendesian, and Demetrius Phalereus, and King Juba, and Apion, and Thallus, and their critic the Jew Josephus; the native vindicator of the ancient history of his people, who either authenticates or refutes the others. Also the Greek geographers' lists must be compared, and the dates of events ascertained, that the chronological connections may be brought up, and thus the reckonings of the various annals be made to give forth light. We must go abroad into the history and literature of all nations. And, in fact, we have already brought the proof in part before you, in giving those hints as to how it is to be effected. But it seems better to delay the full discussion of this, lest in our haste we do not sufficiently carry it out, or lest in its thorough handling we make too lengthened a digression. Chapter 20 To make amends for our delay in this, we bring under your notice something of even greater importance; we point to the majesty of the Scriptures, if not to their antiquity. If you doubt that they are as ancient as we say, we offer proof that they are divine. And you may convince yourselves of this at once, and without going very far. Your instructors, the world, the age, and the event, are all before you. All that is taking place around you was fore-announced; all that you see with your eye was previously heard by the ear. The swallowing up of cities by the earth; the theft of islands by the sea; wars, bringing external and internal convulsions; the collision of kingdoms with kingdoms; famines and pestilences and local massacres, and widespread desolating mortalities; the exaltation of the lowly, and the humbling of the high; the decay of righteousness, the growth of sin, the slackening interest in all good ways; the very seasons and events going out of their ordinary course, monsters and portents taking the place of nature's forms - it was all foreseen and predicted before it came to pass. While we suffer the calamities, we read of them in the Scriptures; as we examine, they are proved. Well, the truth of a prophecy, I think, is the demonstration of its being from above. Hence there is among us an assured faith in regard to coming events as things already proved to us, for they were predicted along with what has day by day fulfilled. They are uttered by the same voices, they are written in the same books - the same Spirit is in them. All time is one to prophecy foretelling the future. Among men, it may be, a distinction of times is made with regard to fulfilment is going on: from being future we think of it as present, and then from being present we count it as belonging to the past. How are we to blame, I pray you, that we believe in things to come as though they already exist with the grounds we have for our faith in these two steps? Chapter 21 Chapter 22 And we affirm indeed the existence of certain spiritual essences; nor is their name unfamiliar. The philosophers acknowledge there are demons; Socrates himself waiting on a demon's will. Why not? Since it is said an evil spirit attached itself specially to him even from his childhood - turning his mind no doubt from what was good. The poets are all acquainted with demons too; even the ignorant common people make frequent use of them in cursing. In fact, they call upon Satan, the demon-chief, in their execrations, as though from some instinctive soul-knowledge of him. Plato also admits the existence of angels and evil dealers in magic, no less, come forward as witnesses to the existence of both kinds of spirits. We are instructed and warned moreover, by our sacred books how from certain angels, who fell of their own free-will, there sprang a more wicked demon-brood, condemned of God along with the authors of their race, and that chief we have referred to. It will be present be enough, however, that some account is given of their work. Their great business is the ruin of mankind from the very first, spiritual wickedness sought our destruction. They inflict, accordingly, upon our bodies diseases and other grievous calamities, while by violent assaults they hurry the soul into sudden and extraordinary excesses. Their marvellous subtleness and tenuity give them access to both parts of our nature. As spiritual, they can do what is for, invisible and intangible, we are not cognizant of their action save by its effects, as when some inexplicable unseen poison in the breeze blights the apples and the grain while in the flower, or kills them in the bud, or destroys them when they have reached maturity; as though by the tainted atmosphere in some unknown way spreading pestilential exhalations. So, too, by an influence equally obscure, demons and angels breathe into the soul, and kindle up its corruptions with furious passions and vile excesses; or with cruel lusts accompanied by various errors, or the worst is that by which these deities are commended to the favour of deceived and deluded human beings, they get their proper food of flesh-fumes and blood when that is offered up to idol-images. What is daintier food to the spirit of evil, than turning men's minds away from the true God by the illusions of a false divination? And here I will explain how these illusions are managed. Every spirit is possessed of wings. This is a common property of both angels and demons. So they are everywhere in a single moment; the whole world is as one place to them; all that is done

the whole extent of it, it is as easy for them to know as to report. Their swiftness of motion is taken for divinity, because their nature is unknown. Thus they would have themselves thought sometimes the authors of the thin announce; and sometimes, no doubt, the bad things are their doing, never the good. The purposes of God, too, come up of old from the lips of the prophets, even as they spoke them; and they gather them still from their works, when they hear them read aloud. Thus getting, too, from this source some intimations of the future, they set themselves up as rivals of the true God, while they steal His divinations. But the skill with which their responses are shaped to meet the events, your Cr-si and Pyrrhi know too well. On the other hand, it was in that way we have explained, the Pythia is able to declare that they were cooking a tortoise with the flesh of a lamb; in a moment he had been to Lydia. For dwelling in the air, and their nearness to the stars, and their commerce with the clouds, they have means of knowing preparatory processes going on in these upper regions, and thus can give promise of the rains which they already have. Very kind too, no doubt, they are in regard to the healing of diseases. For, first of all, they make you ill; then, to get a miracle out of it, they command the application of remedies either altogether new, or contrary to those in use, and straightway withdrawing hurtful influence, they are supposed to have wrought a cure. What need, then, to their other artifices, or yet further of the deceptive power which they have as spirits: of these Castor apparitions, water carried by a sieve, and a ship drawn along by a girdle, and a beard reddened by a touch, all done with the object of showing that men should believe in the deity of stones, and not seek after the only true God? Chapter 10. Moreover, if sorcerers call forth ghosts, and even make what seem the souls of the dead to appear; if they put death, in order to get a response from the oracle; if, with their juggling illusions, they make a pretence of doing various miracles; if they put dreams into people's minds by the power of the angels and demons whose aid they have invited, by whose influence, too, goats and tables are made to divine, - how much more likely is this power of theirs to be zealous in doing with all its might, of its own inclination, and for its own objects, what it does to serve the ends of others! Or if both angels and demons do just what your gods do, where in that case is the pre-eminence of the gods which we must surely think to be above all in might? Will it not then be more reasonable to hold that these spirits are themselves gods, giving as they do the very proofs which raise your gods to godhead, than that the gods are the angels and demons? You make a distinction of places, I suppose, regarding as gods in their temple those who have divinity you do not recognize elsewhere; counting the madness which leads one man to leap from the sacred house as something different from that which leads another to leap from an adjoining house; looking on one who cuts his secret parts as under a different furor from another who cuts his throat. The result of the frenzy is the same, and the manner of instigation is one. But thus far we have been dealing only in words: we now proceed to a proof of fact, which we shall show that under different names you have real identity. Let a person be brought before your tribunal who is plainly under demoniacal possession. The wicked spirit, bidden to speak by a follower of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon, as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a god. Or, if you let there be produced one of the god-possessed, as they are supposed, who, inhaling at the altar, conceive divine fumes, who are delivered of it by retching, who vent it forth in agonies of gasping. Let that same Virgin Cælia herself the rain-promiser, let Æsculapius discoverer of medicines, ready to prolong the life of Socordius, and Tiberius and Asclepiodotus, now in the last extremity, if they would not confess, in their fear of lying to a Christian, that they were demons, then and there shed the blood of that most impudent follower of Christ. What clearer than a confession that? What more trustworthy than such a proof? The simplicity of truth is thus set forth; its own worth sustains it on ground remains for the least suspicion. Do you say that it is done by magic, or some trick of that sort? You will not say anything of the sort, if you have been allowed the use of your ears and eyes. For what argument can you bring against a thing that is exhibited to the eye in its naked reality? If, on the one hand, they are really gods, why do they pretend to be demons? Is it from fear of us? In that case your divinity is put in subjection to Christians; and you surely can never ascribe deity to that which is under authority of man, nay (if it adds anything to the disgrace) to your very enemies. If, on the other hand, they are demons or angels, why, inconsistently with this, do they presume to put themselves forth as acting the part of gods? For as beings who put themselves out as gods would never willingly put themselves demons, if they were gods indeed, that they might not thereby in fact abdicate their dignity; so those whom you know to be no more than demons, would not dare to act as gods, if those whose names they take and use were divine. For they would not dare to treat with disrespect the higher majesty of beings, whose displeasure they were to be dreaded. So this divinity of yours is no divinity; for if it were, it would not be pretended to by demons.

it would not be denied by gods. But since on both sides there is a concurrent acknowledgment that they are no gods, let us gather from this that there is but a single race - I mean the race of demons, the real race in both cases. Let your gods search, then, now be after gods; for those whom you had imagined to be so you find to be spirits of evil. The truth is, as we have thus not only shown from our own gods that neither themselves nor any others have claims to deity, but also see at once who is really God, and whether that is He and He alone whom we Christians own; as also whether we should believe in Him, and worship Him, after the manner of our Christian faith and discipline. But at once they will say, what is this Christ with his fables? Is he an ordinary man? Is he a sorcerer? Was his body stolen by his disciples from the tomb? Is he now in the realms below? Or is he not rather up in the heavens, thence about to come again, making the world shake, filling the earth with dread alarms, making all but Christians wail - as the Power of God, and the Spirit of God, as the Word, the Reason, the Wisdom, and the Son of God? Mock as you like, but get the demons if you can; let them deny that Christ is coming to judge every human soul which has existed from the beginning, clothing it again with the body it laid aside at death; let them declare it, say, before your tribunal, that this work has been allotted to Minos and Rhadamanthus, as Plato and the poets agree; let them put away from themselves at least the mark of ignominy and condemnation. They disclaim being unclean spirits, which yet we must hold as proved by their relish for the blood and fumes and f-tid carcasses of sacrificial animals, and even by the vile language of their ministers. Let them deny that, for their wickedness condemned already, they are kept for that very judgment-day, with all their worshippers and their works. Why, all the authority and power we have over them is in naming the name of Christ, and recalling to their memory the woes with which God threatens them at the hands of Christ as Judge, and which they expect one day to overtake them. Fearing Christ in God, and God in Christ, they become to the servants of God and Christ. So at our touch and breathing, overwhelmed by the thought and realization of the judgment fires, they leave at our command the bodies they have entered, unwilling, and distressed, and before our eyes put to an open shame. You believe them when they lie; give credit to them, then, when they speak the truth about themselves. No one plays the liar to bring disgrace upon his own head, but for the sake of honour rather. You give more ready confidence to people making confessions against themselves, than denials in their own behalf. It has not been an unusual thing, accordingly, for those testimonies of your deities to convert men to Christianity; for in giving full belief to them, we are led to believe in Christ. Yes, your very gods kindle up faith in our Scriptures, they build up the confidence of our hope. You do homage, as I know, to them also with the blood of Christians. On no account would they lose those who are so useful and dutiful to them, anxious even to hold you fast, lest some day or other the Christians you might put them to the rout - if under the power of a follower of Christ, who desires to prove to you the Truth, it were at all possible for them to lie.

Chapter 24 This whole confession of these beings, in which they declare that they are not gods, and in which they tell you that there is no God but one, the God whom we adore, is quite sufficient to clear us from the crime of treason, chiefly against the Roman religion. For if it is certain the gods have no existence, there is no religion in the case. If there is no religion, because there are no gods, we are assuredly not guilty of any offense against religion. Instead of that, the charge recoils on your own head: worshipping a lie, you are really guilty of the crime you charge on us, not merely by refusing the true religion of the true God, but by going to a further length of persecuting it. But now, granting that these objects of your worship are really gods, is it not generally held that there is one higher and more potent, as it were the world's chief ruler, endowed with absolute power and majesty? For the common way is to apportion deity, giving an imperial and supreme domination to one, while other offices are put into the hands of many, as Plato describes great Jupiter in the heavens, surrounded by an array of deities and demons. It behooves us, therefore, to show equal respect to the procurators, prefects, and governors of the divine empire. And yet how great a crime does he commit, who, with the object of gaining higher favour with Cæsar, transfers his endeavours and his hopes to another, and does not confess that the appellation of God alone belongs only to the Supreme Head, when it is held a capital offense among us to call, or hear called, by the highest title any other than Cæsar himself! Let one man worship God, another Jupiter; let one lift suppliant hands to the heavens, another to the altar of Fides; let one - if you choose to take this view of it - count in prayer the clouds, and another the ceiling panels; let one consecrate his own life to his God, and another that of a goat. For see that we do not give a further ground for the charge of irreligion, by taking away religious liberty, and forbidding free choice of deity, so that I may no longer worship according to my inclination, but am compelled to worship against it. No mortal human being would care to have unwilling homage rendered him; and so the very Egyptians have been permitted

use of their ridiculous superstition, liberty to make gods of birds and beasts, nay, to condemn to death any one who kills a god of their sort. Every province even, and every city, has its god. Syria has Astarte, Arabia has Dusares, Norici have Belenus, Africa has its Cælestis, Mauritania has its own princes. I have spoken, I think, of Roman provinces, and yet I have not said their gods are Roman; for they are not worshipped at Rome any more than our gods are ranked as deities over Italy itself by municipal consecration, such as Delventinus of Casinum, Visidianus of Ancharia of Asculum, Nortia of Volsinii, Valentia of Oriculum, Hostia of Satrium, Father Curis of Falisci, in honour of whom, too, Juno got her surname. In fact, we alone are prevented having a religion of our own. We give offence to the Romans, we are excluded from the rights and privileges of Romans, because we do not worship the gods of Rome. But that there is a God of all, whose we all are, whether we will or no. But with you liberty is given to worship any god, but the true God, as though He were not rather the God all should worship, to whom all belong. Chapter 25 I thought I had offered sufficient proof upon the question of false and true divinity, having shown that the proof rests not merely on debate and argument, but on the witness of the very beings whom you believe are gods, so that the point needed no further handling. However, having been led thus naturally to speak of the Romans, I shall not avoid the controversy which is invited by the groundless assertion of those who maintain that, as a reward of their singular homage to religion, the Romans have been raised to such heights of power as to have become masters of the world; and that so certain are the beings they worship, that those prosper beyond all others, who beyond all others honour them. This, for me, is the wages the gods have paid the Romans for their devotion. The progress of the empire is to be ascribed to Saturn, the Mutunus, and Larentina! For I can hardly think that foreign gods would have been disposed to show more favour to an alien race than to their own, and given their own fatherland, in which they had their birth, grew up to manhood, were illustrious, and at last were buried, over to invaders from another shore! As for Cybele, if she set her affections on the city of Rome as sprung of the Trojan stock saved from the arms of Greece, she herself forsooth being of the same race - if she foresaw her transference to the avenging people by whom Greece the conqueror of Phrygia was to be taken, let her look to it (in regard of her native country's conquest by Greece). Why, too, even in these days the Mater has given a notable proof of her greatness which she has conferred as a boon upon the city; when, after the loss of the State of Marcus Aurelius at Sirmium, on the sixteenth before the Kalends of April, that most sacred high priest was offering, a week after, impure libations of blood drawn from his own arms, and issuing his commands that extraordinary prayers should be made for the safety of the emperor already dead. O tardy messengers! O sleepy divinity! Through whose fault Cybele had not an earlier knowledge of the imperial decease, that the Christians might have had occasion to ridicule a goddess so unworthy. Jupiter, again, would surely never have permitted his own Crete to be taken once before the Roman Fasces, forgetful of that Idean cave and the Corybantian cymbals, and the sweet odours which nursed him there. Would he not have exalted his own tomb above the entire Capitol, that the land which covers the head of Jove might rather be the mistress of the world? Would Juno have desired the destruction of the Punic city, but even to the neglect of Samos, and that by a nation of Æneadæ? As to that I know, Here were her arms, here was her chariot, this kingdom, if the Fates permit, the goddess tends and cherishes to be mistress of the nations. Jove's hapless wife and sister had no power to prevail against the Fates! Jupiter himself is sustained by fate. And yet the Romans have never done such homage to the Fates, which gave them Carthage against the purpose and the will to the abandoned harlot Larentina. It is undoubted that not a few of your gods have reigned on earth as kings. Now they now possess the power of bestowing empire, when they were kings themselves, from whence had they received their kingly honours? Whom did Jupiter and Saturn worship? A Sterculus, I suppose. But did the Romans, along with their native-born inhabitants, afterwards adore also some who were never kings? In that case, however, they were worshippers of the reign of others, who did not yet bow down to them, as not yet raised to godhead. It belongs to others, then, to receive the gift of kingdoms, since there were kings before these gods had their names on the roll of divinities. But how utterly foolish it is to attribute the greatness of the Roman name to religious merits, since it was after Rome became an empire, or call it still a kingdom, that the religion she professes made its chief progress! Is it the case now? Has religion been the source of the prosperity of Rome? Though Numa set agoing an eagerness after superstitious rites, yet religion among the Romans was not yet a matter of images or temples. It was frugal in its ways, its rites were simple, and there were no capitols struggling to the heavens; but the altars were offhand ones of turf, and the sacrificial vessels were yet of Samian earthen-ware, and from these the odours rose, and no likeness of God was to be seen. At that time the skill of the Greeks and Tuscans in image-making had not yet overrun the city with the products of

art. The Romans, therefore, were not distinguished for their devotion to the gods before they attained to greatness so their greatness was not the result of their religion. Indeed, how could religion make a people great who have their greatness to their irreligion? For, if I am not mistaken, kingdoms and empires are acquired by wars, and are extended by victories. More than that, you cannot have wars and victories without the taking, and often the destruction of cities. That is a thing in which the gods have their share of calamity. Houses and temples suffer alike; there is indiscriminate slaughter of priests and citizens; the hand of rapine is laid equally upon sacred and on common things. Thus the sacrileges of the Romans are as numerous as their trophies. They boast as many triumphs over the nations; as many spoils of battle they have still, as there remain images of captive deities. And the poor gods submit to be adored by their enemies, and they ordain illimitable empire to those whose injuries rather than the simulated homage should have had retribution at their hands. But divinities unconscious are with impunity dishonoured just as in vain they are adored. You certainly never can believe that devotion to religion has evidently advanced the greatness of a people who, as we have put it, have either grown by injuring religion, or have injured religion by their growth. Those, too, whose kingdoms have become part of the one great whole of the Roman empire, were not idolaters when their kingdoms were taken from them. Chapter 26 Examine then, and see if He be not the dispenser of kingdoms, who is Lord at once of the world which is ruled, and of man himself who rules; if He have not ordained the changes of dynasties, with their appointed seasons, who was before all time, and made the world a body of time; if the rise and the fall of states are not the work of Him, under whose sovereignty the human race once existed without sin at all. How do you allow yourselves to fall into such error? Why, the Rome of rural simplicity is older than some of the gods; she reigned before her proud, vast Capitol was built. The Babylonians exercised dominion, too, before the Pontiffs; and the Medes before the Quindecemvirs; and the Egyptians before the Salii; and the Assyrians before the Luperci; and the Amazons before the Vestal Virgins. And to add another point: if the religions of Rome give empires, ancient Judea would never have been a kingdom, despising as it did one and all these idol deities; Judea, which the Romans once honoured with victims, and its temple with gifts, and its people with treaties; and which would never have been beneath your sceptre but for that last and crowning offense against God, in rejecting and crucifying Christ. Chapter 27 Enough has been said in these remarks to confute the charge of treason against your religion: for you cannot be held to do harm to that which has no existence. When we are called therefore to sacrifice, we resolutely refuse, relying on the knowledge we possess, by which we are well assured of the real objects to whom these services are offered, under profaning of images and the deification of human names. Some, indeed, think it a piece of insanity when it is in our power to offer sacrifice at once, and go away unharmed, holding as ever our convictions, we persist in our obstinate persistence in our confession to our safety. You advise us, forsooth, to take unjust advantage of your knowledge; you know whence such suggestions come, who is at the bottom of it all, and how every effort is made, now by cunning and now by merciless persecution, to overthrow our constancy. No other than that spirit, half devil and half angel, hating us because of his own separation from God, and stirred with envy for the favour God has shown us, turns our minds against us by an occult influence, moulding and instigating them to all that perversity in judgment, and that unrighteous cruelty, which we have mentioned at the beginning of our work, when entering on this discussion. Chapter 28 the whole power of demons and kindred spirits is subject to us, yet still, as ill-disposed slaves sometimes conjured by contumacy with fear, and delight to injure those of whom they at the same time stand in awe, so is it here. For Satan also inspires hatred. Besides, in their desperate condition, as already under condemnation, it gives them some respite while punishment delays, to have the usufruct of their malignant dispositions. And yet, when hands are laid on them they are subdued at once, and submit to their lot; and those whom at a distance they oppose, in close quarters supplicate for mercy. So when, like insurrectionary workhouses, or prisons, or mines, or any such penal slavery, break forth against us their masters, they know all the while that they are not a match for us, and just on that account, indeed, rush the more recklessly to destruction. We resist them, unwillingly, as though they were equal; we contend against them by persevering in that which they assail; and our triumph over them is never more complete when we are condemned for resolute adherence to our faith. Chapter 28 But as it was easily seen to be unjust to compel freemen against their will to offer sacrifice (for even in other acts of religious service a willing mind is required), it should be counted quite absurd for one man to compel another to do honour to the gods, when he ought even to do so voluntarily, and in the sense of his own need, to seek their favour, lest in the liberty which is his right he should be ready to say, I want none of Jupiter's favours; pray who are you? Let Janus meet me with angry looks, with wh

his faces he likes; what have you to do with me? You have been led, no doubt, by these same evil spirits to coffer sacrifice for the well-being of the emperor; and you are under a necessity of using force, just as we are under obligation to face the dangers of it. This brings us, then, to the second ground of accusation, that we are guilty of treason against a majesty more august; for you do homage with a greater dread and an intenser reverence to Olympian Jove himself. And if you knew it, upon sufficient grounds. For is not any living man better than a dead man, whoever he be? But this is not done by you on any other ground than regard to a power whose presence you do not realize; so that also in this you are convicted of impiety to your gods, inasmuch as you show a greater reverence to human sovereignty than you do to them. Then, too, among you, people far more readily swear a false oath in the name of all the gods, than in the name of the single genius of Cæsar. Chapter 29 Let it be made clear, then, first of all, that those to whom sacrifice is offered are really able to protect either emperor or anybody else, and so adjudge us guilty of treason, if angels and demons, spirits of most wicked nature, do any good, if the lost save, if the condemned gain liberty, if the dead (I refer to what you know well enough) defend the living. For surely the first thing they would look to would be the protection of their statues, and images, and temples, which rather owe their safety, I think, to the watch kept by Cæsar's guards. Nay, I think the very materials of which these are made come from Cæsar's hands; there is not a temple but depends on Cæsar's will. Yes, and many gods have felt the displeasure of the Cæsar for my argument if they are also partakers of his favour, when he bestows on them some gift or privilege. How can those who are thus in Cæsar's power, who belong entirely to him, have Cæsar's protection in their hands, so that you can imagine them able to give to Cæsar what they more readily get from him? This, then, is the ground on which we are charged with treason against the imperial majesty, to wit, that we do not put the emperors under their own protection, that we do not offer a mere mock service on their behalf, as not believing their safety rests in leaden hands. But we are impious in a high degree who look for it where it is not, who seek it from those who have it not to give, pass it to Him who has it entirely in His power. Besides this, you persecute those who know where to seek for it, and who, where to seek for it, are able as well to secure it. Chapter 30 For we offer prayer for the safety of our princes to the eternal, the true, the living God, whose favour, beyond all others, they must themselves desire. They know from whence they have obtained their power; they know, as they are men, from whom they have received life itself; they are aware that He is God alone, on whose power alone they are entirely dependent, to whom they are second, after whom they occupy the highest places, before and above all the gods. Why not, since they are above all living men, and the living, and the living, are superior to the dead? They reflect upon the extent of their power, and so they come to understand that they are highest; they acknowledge that they have all their might from Him against whom their might is nought. Let the emperor make war on heaven; let him lead heaven captive in his triumph; let him put guards on heaven; let him impose laws on heaven! He cannot. Just because he is less than heaven, he is great. For he himself is His to whom heaven and earth and creature appertain. He gets his sceptre where he first got his humanity; his power where he got the breath of life. Thither we lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin; with head uncovered, for we have nothing of which whereof to be ashamed; finally, without a monitor, because it is from the heart we supplicate. Without ceasing, for our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest, whatever, as man or Cæsar, an emperor would wish. These things I cannot ask from any but the God from whom I know I shall obtain them, both because He bestows them and because I have claims upon Him for their gift, as being a servant of His, rendering homage to Him alone, persecuted for His doctrine, offering to Him, at His own requirement, that costly and noble sacrifice of prayer: a soul dispatched from the chaste body, an unstained soul, a sanctified spirit, not the few grains of incense a farthing worth, not tears of an Arabian tree - not a few drops of wine, - not the blood of some worthless ox to which death is a relief, and, in addition to other offensive things, a polluted conscience, so that one wonders, when your victims are executed by these vile priests, why the examination is not rather of the sacrificers than the sacrifices. With our hands thus stretched out and up to God, rend us with your iron claws, hang us up on crosses, wrap us in flames, take our lives from us with the sword, let loose the wild beasts on us - the very attitude of a Christian praying is one of preparation for all punishment. Let this, good rulers, be your work: wring from us the soul, beseeching God on the emperor's behalf. Upon the truth of God, and devotion to His name, put the brand of crime. Chapter 31 But we merely, you say, feign the emperor, and feign these prayers of ours to escape persecution. Thank you for your mistake, for you give us the opportunity of proving our allegations. Do you, then, who think that we care nothing for the welfare of Cæsar, let

God's revelations, examine our sacred books, which we do not keep in hiding, and which many accidents put in the hands of those who are not of us. Learn from them that a large benevolence is enjoined upon us, even so far as to sue for mercy from God for our enemies, and to beseech blessings on our persecutors. Matthew 5:44 Who, then, are greater enemies to Christians, persecutors of Christians, than the very parties with treason against whom we are charged? Nay, even in terms of the law, clearly, the law says, Pray for kings, and rulers, and powers, that all may be peace with you. 1 Timothy 2:2 For where is disturbance in the empire, if the commotion is felt by its other members, surely we too, though we are not the cause, will be given to disorder, are to be found in some place or other which the calamity affects. Chapter 32 There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes - is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration. More than this, though we decline to swear by the genii of the Cæsars, we swear by their safety, which is worth far more than all your genii. Are you ignorant that these genii are called Dæmones, and thence the diminutive name Dæmonia is applied to them? We respect in the emperors the order which God has set them over the nations. We know that there is that in them which God has willed; and to what God has willed we desire all safety, and we count an oath by it a great oath. But as for demons, that is, your genii, we have been taught the habit of exorcising them, not of swearing by them, and thereby conferring on them divine honour. Chapter 33 I dwell longer on the reverence and sacred respect of Christians to the emperor, whom we cannot but look up to as appointed by our Lord to his office? So that on valid grounds I might say Cæsar is more ours than yours, for our God has appointed him. Therefore, as having this propriety in him, I do more than you for his welfare, not merely because I ask it of him who can give it, or because I ask it as one who deserves to get it, but also because, in keeping the majesty of God within due limits, and putting it under the Most High, and making it less than divine, I commend him the more to the favour of Deity, to whom I make him alone inferior. But I place him in subjection to one I regard as more glorious than himself. Never will I call the emperor God, and that either because it is not in me to be guilty of falsehood; or that I dare not turn him into ridicule; or that not even himself will desire to have that high name applied to him. If he is but a man, it is his interest as man to give God His higher place. Let him think it enough to bear the name of emperor. That, too, is a great name of God's giving. To call him God, is to rob him of his title. If he is not a man, emperor cannot be. Even when, amid the honours of a triumph, he sits on that lofty chariot, he is reminded that he is only human. A voice at his back keeps whispering in his ear, Look behind you; remember you are but a man. And it is in his exultation, that he shines with a glory so surpassing as to require an admonitory reference to his condition. It adds to his greatness that he needs such a reminiscence, lest he should think himself divine. Chapter 34 Augustus, the founder of the empire, would not even have the title Lord; for that, too, is a name of Deity. For my part, I am willing to give the emperor this designation, but in the common acceptation of the word, and when I am not forced to call him Lord as in God's place. But my relation to him is one of freedom; for I have but one true Lord, the God omnipotent and eternal, who is Lord of the emperor as well. How can he, who is truly father of his country, be its lord? The name of piety is more grateful than the name of power; so the heads of families are called fathers rather than lords. Far more should the emperor have the name of God. We can only profess our belief that he is that by the most unworthy and fatal flattery; it is just as if, having an emperor, you call another by the name, in which case will you not give ground and unappeasable offense to him who actually reigns? - an offense he, too, needs to fear on whom you have bestowed the title. Give all reverence to God, if you wish Him to be propitious to the emperor. Give up all worship of, and belief in, any other being as divine. Cease also to give the sacred name to him who has need of God himself. If such a man is not ashamed of its lie, in addressing a man as divine, let it have some dread at least of the evil omen which it bears. It is the invocation of a curse, to give Cæsar the name of god before his apotheosis. Chapter 35 This is the reason, then, why Christians are counted public enemies: that they pay no vain, nor false, nor foolish honours to the emperor; that, as men believing in the true religion, they prefer to celebrate their festal days with a good conscience instead of with the common wantonness. It is, forsooth, a notable homage to bring fires and couches out before the public, to have feasting from street to street, to turn the city into one great tavern, to make mud with wine, to rush troops to acts of violence, to deeds of shamelessness to lust allurements! What! Is public joy manifested by public disgrace? Do things unseemly at other times beseem the festal days of princes? Do they who observe the rule

out of reverence for Cæsar, for his sake turn aside from them? Shall piety be a license to immoral deeds, and religion be regarded as affording the occasion for all riotous extravagance? Poor we, worthy of all condemnation, why do we keep the votive days and high rejoicings in honour of the Cæsars with chastity, sobriety, and virtue? On the day of gladness, do we neither cover our door-posts with laurels, nor intrude upon the day with lamps? It is no proper thing, at the call of a public festivity, to dress your house up like some new brothel. However, in the matter of this homage to a lesser majesty, in reference to which we are accused of a lower sacrilege, because we do not keep along with you the holidays of the Cæsars in a manner forbidden alike by modesty, decency, and purity · in truth, they have been established rather as affording opportunities for licentiousness than from any worthy motive · in this I am anxious to point out how faithful and true you are, lest perchance here also those who will not have us count as Romans, but enemies of Rome's chief rulers, be found themselves worse than we wicked Christians! I appeal to the inhabitants of Rome themselves, to the native population of the seven hills: does that Roman vernacular of the forum spare a Cæsar? The Tiber and the wild beasts' schools bear witness. Say now if nature had covered our hearts with a transparent substance through which the light could pass, whose hearts, all graven over, would not betray the truth to another and another Cæsar presiding at the distribution of a largess? And this at the very time they are shouting for Jupiter take years from us, and with them lengthen like to you, · words as foreign to the lips of a Christian as it is to the heart of keeping with his character to desire a change of emperor. But this is the rabble, you say; yet, as the rabble they still are Romans, and none more frequently than they demand the death of Christians. Of course, then, the higher classes, as befits their higher rank, are religiously faithful. No breath of treason is there ever in the senate, in the equestrian order, in the camp, in the palace. Whence, then, came a Cassius, a Niger, an Albinus? Whence the death of the Cæsar between the two laurel groves? Whence they who practised wrestling, that they might acquire skill to slay him? Whence they who in full armour broke into the palace, more audacious than all your Tigerii and Parthenii? I mistake not, they were Romans; that is, they were not Christians. Yet all of them, on the very eve of their traitorous outbreak, offered sacrifices for the safety of the emperor, and swore by his genius, one thing in profession, and another in the heart; and no doubt they were in the habit of calling Christians enemies of the state. Yes, and perjured who are now daily brought to light as confederates or approvers of these crimes and treasons, the still remaining gleanings after a vintage of traitors, with what verdant and branching laurels they clad their door-posts, with what lofty and brilliant lamps they smoked their porches, with what most exquisite and gaudy couches they divided themselves among themselves; not that they might celebrate public rejoicings, but that they might get a foretaste of their own votive seasons in partaking of the festivities of another, and inaugurate the model and image of their hope, by inscribing their minds the emperor's name. The same homage is paid, dutifully too, by those who consult astrologers, and soothsayers, and augurs, and magicians, about the life of the Cæsars · arts which, as made known by the angels, are sinned, and forbidden by God, Christians do not even make use of in their own affairs. But who has any occasion to inquire about the life of the emperor, if he have not some wish or thought against it, or some hopes and expectations after it? For consultations of this sort have not the same motive in the case of friends as in the case of sovereigns. The anxiety of a kinsman is something very different from that of a subject. Chapter 36 If it is the fact that men bearing the name of Romans are found to be enemies of Rome, why are we, on the ground that we are regarded as Romans, denied the name of Romans? We may be at once Romans and foes of Rome, when men passing for Romans are found enemies of their country. So the affection, and fealty, and reverence, due to the emperors do not consist in such a display of homage as these, which even hostility may be zealous in performing, chiefly as a cloak to its purposes; but in the ways which Deity as certainly enjoins on us, as they are held to be necessary in the case of all men as well as emperors. Deeds of true heart-goodness are not due by us to emperors alone. We never do good with respect to ourselves for in our own interest we conduct ourselves as those who take no payment either of praise or premium from men or God, who both requires and remunerates an impartial benevolence. We are the same to emperors as to our ordinary neighbors. For we are equally forbidden to wish ill, to do ill, to speak ill, to think ill of all men. The thing we must not do to an emperor, we must not do to any one else: what we would not do to anybody, a fortiori, perhaps we would not do to him whom God has been pleased so highly to exalt. Chapter 37 If we are enjoined, then, to love our enemies, have we remarked above, whom have we to hate? If injured, we are forbidden to retaliate, lest we become as bad as those who can suffer injury at our hands? In regard to this, recall your own experiences. How often you inflict gross cruelties on Christians, partly because it is your own inclination, and partly in obedience to the laws! How often

the hostile mob, paying no regard to you, takes the law into its own hand, and assails us with stones and flames; the very frenzy of the Bacchanals, they do not even spare the Christian dead, but tear them, now sadly changed, no longer entire, from the rest of the tomb, from the asylum we might say of death, cutting them in pieces, rending asunder. Yet, banded together as we are, ever so ready to sacrifice our lives, what single case of revenge for injury are you able to point to, though, if it were held right among us to repay evil by evil, a single night with a torch or two could achieve an ample vengeance? But away with the idea of a sect divine avenging itself by human fires, shrinking from the sufferings in which it is tried. If we desired, indeed, to act the part of open enemies, not merely of secret avengers, would there be any lacking in strength, whether of numbers or resources? The Moors, the Parthians themselves, or any single people, however great, inhabiting a distinct territory, and confined within their own boundaries, surpasses, forsooth, in numbers, one spread over all the world! We are but of yesterday, and have filled every place among you · cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum · we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods. For what wars should we not be not eager, even with unequal forces, we who so willingly yield ourselves to the sword, if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay? Without arms even, and raising no insurrectionary banner, but simply in arms to you, we could carry on the contest with you by an ill-willed severance alone. For if such multitudes of men were to break away from you, and betake themselves to some remote corner of the world, why, the very loss of so many, whatever sort they were, would cover the empire with shame; nay, in the very forsaking, vengeance would be taken. Why, you would be horror-struck at the solitude in which you would find yourselves, at such an all-prevailing silence and that stupor as of a dead world. You would have to seek subjects to govern. You would have more enemies remaining. For now it is the immense number of Christians which makes your enemies so few · almost all the inhabitants of your various cities being followers of Christ. Yet you choose to call us enemies of the human race, rather than of human error. Nay, who would deliver you from those secret foes, ever busy both destroying your souls and ruining your health? Who would save you, I mean, from the attacks of those spirits of evil, which without reward or hire we resist? This alone would be revenge enough for us, that you were henceforth left free to the possession of unclean spirits, instead of taking into account what is due to us for the important protection we afford you, and though we are not merely no trouble to you, but in fact necessary to your well-being, you prefer to hold us enemies, as indeed we are not of man, but rather of his error. Chapter 38 Ought not Christians, therefore, to receive not merely a somewhat better treatment, but to have a place among the law-tolerated societies, seeing they are not chargeable with any such crimes as are commonly dreaded from societies of the illicit class? For, unless I mistake the matter, the prevention of such associations is based on a prudential regard to public order, that the state may not be divided into parties, which would naturally lead to disturbance in the electoral assemblies, the councils, the curiæ, the special conventions; in the public shows by the hostile collisions of rival parties; especially when now, in pursuit of gain, men have begun to consider their violence an article to be bought and sold. But as those in whom all ardour in the pursuit of glory and honour is dead, we have no pressing inducement to take part in your public meetings; nor is there anything more foreign to us than affairs of state. We acknowledge one all-embracing commonwealth · the world. We renounce the spectacles, as strongly as we renounce the matters originating them, which we know were conceived of superstitious men; we give up the very things which are the basis of their representations. Among us nothing is ever said, or seen, or heard, which has anything in common with the madness of the circus, the immodesty of the theatre, the atrocities of the arena, the useless exercises of the wrestling-ground. Why do you take offense at us because we differ from you in your pleasures? If we will not partake of your enjoyments, the loss is ours, if there be loss in the case, not yours. We reject what pleases you. You, on the other hand, have no taste for what is our delight. The Epicureans were asked by you to decide for themselves one true source of pleasure · I mean equanimity; the Christian, on his part, has no such enjoyments · what harm in that? Chapter 39 I shall at once go on, then, to exhibit the peculiarities of the Christian society, that, as I have refuted the evil charged against it, I may point out its positive good. We are all knit together as such by a common religious profession, by unity of discipline, and by the bond of a common hope. We meet together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God as with united force, we may reach Him in our supplications. This violence God delights in. We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers and for those in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation. We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence

However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our hearts more steadfast; and no less by inculcations of God's precepts we confirm good habits. In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered. For with a great gravity is the work of justice carried on among us, as befits those who feel assured that they are in the sight of God; and you have the most exact example of judgment to come when any one has sinned so grievously as to require his severance from us in public congregation and in all sacred intercourse. The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honour not by purchase, but by established character. There is no buying and selling of any sort in the things of God. Though our treasure chest, it is not made up of purchase-money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day of the like, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund. For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, and drinking-bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of the girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is not the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another; themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves would sooner put to death. And they are angry with us, too, because we call each other brethren; for no other reason we think, than because among themselves names of consanguinity are assumed in mere pretence of affection. But we brethren as well, by the law of our common mother nature, though you are hardly men, because brothers so united at the same time, how much more fittingly they are called and counted brothers who have been led to the knowledge of their common Father, who have drunk in one spirit of holiness, who from the same womb of a common ignorance have agonized into the same light of truth! But on this very account, perhaps, we are regarded as having less claim to be held true brothers, that no tragedy makes a noise about our brotherhood, or that the family possessions, which destroy brotherhood among you, create fraternal bonds among us. One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us but our wives. We give up our community which is practised alone by others, who not only take possession of the wives of their friends, but most tolerantly also accommodate their friends with theirs, following the example, I believe, of those wise men of ancient times, the Socrates and the Roman Cato, who shared with their friends the wives whom they had married, it seems for the progeny both to themselves and to others; whether in this acting against their partners' wishes, I am not able to say. Why should they have any care over their chastity, when their husbands so readily bestowed it away? O noble Attic wisdom, of Roman gravity - the philosopher and the censor playing pimps! What wonder if that great love of Christians towards one another is desecrated by you! For you abuse also our humble feasts, on the ground that they are extravagant as well as infamously wicked. To us, it seems, applies the saying of Diogenes: The people of Megara though they were going to die on the morrow; they build as though they were never to die! But one sees more of a mote in another's eye than the beam in his own. Why, the very air is soured with the eructations of so many tribes of *curiæ*, and *decuriæ*. The *Salii* cannot have their feast without going into debt; you must get the accountants to tell you what the tenths of Hercules and the sacrificial banquets cost; the choicest cook is appointed for the *Apaturia*, the *Dionysia*, the Attic mysteries; the smoke from the banquet of Serapis will call out the firemen. Yet about the modest supper-room of the Christians alone a great ado is made. Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it *agapè*, i.e., affection. Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain, since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy; not as it is with you, do parasites aspire to the glory of satisfying their licentious propensities, selling themselves for a belly-feast to all disgraceful treatment - but as it is with God himself, a peculiar respect is shown to the lowly. If the object of our feast be good, in the light of that consider its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say it is enough, as those who remember that even during the night they have to worship; they talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their auditors. After manual ablution, and the bringing in of lights, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the or one of his own collection - a proof of the measure of our drinking. As the feast commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed. We go

it, not like troops of mischief-doers, nor bands of vagabonds, nor to break out into licentious acts, but to have as much care of our modesty and chastity as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet. Give the congregation of the Christians its due, and hold it unlawful, if it is like assemblies of the illicit sort: by all means let it be condemned, if any complaint can be validly laid against it, such as lies against secret factions. But who ever suffered harm from our assemblies? We are in our congregations just what we are when separated from each other: we are as a community what we are individuals; we injure nobody, we trouble nobody. When the upright, when the pious, when the pure assemble in congregation, you ought not to call that a faction, but a *curia*· [i.e., the court of God.] Chapter 40 On the contrary, they deserve the name of faction who conspire to bring odium on good men and virtuous, who cry out against innocent blood, offering as the justification of their enmity a baseless plea, that they think the Christians the cause of every public disaster, of every affliction with which the people are visited. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is, Away with the Christians to the lion! What! shall you give such multitudes to a single beast? Pray, tell me how many calamities befell the world and particular cities before Tiberius reigned · before the coming, that is, of Christ? We read of the islands of Hiera, and Anaphe, and Delos, and Rhodes, and Cos, with many thousands of human beings been swallowed up. Plato informs us that a region larger than Asia or Africa was seized by the Atlantic Ocean. An earthquake, too, drank up the Corinthian sea; and the force of the waves cut off a part of Lucania, whence it obtained the name of Sicily. These things surely could not have taken place without the inhabitants suffering by them. But · I do not say were Christians, those despisers of your gods · but where were your gods themselves in those days? For the flood poured its destroying waters over all the world, or, as Plato thought, merely the level portion of it? For that they are of later date than that calamity, the very cities in which they were born and died, nay, which they themselves founded, bear ample testimony; for the cities could have no existence at this day unless as belonging to postdiluvian times. Palestine had not yet received from Egypt its Jewish swarm (of emigrants), nor had the race from which we are sprung yet settled down there, when its neighbors Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire from heaven. We smell of that conflagration; and if there are apples there upon the trees, it is only a promise to the eye they give you but touch them, and they turn to ashes. Nor had Tuscia and Campania to complain of Christians in the day when heaven overwhelmed Vulsinii, and Pompeii was destroyed by fire from its own mountain. No one yet worshipped the true God at Rome, when Hannibal at Cannæ counted the Roman slain by the pecks of Roman rings. Your gods, of adoration, universally acknowledged, when the Senones closely besieged the very Capitol. And it is in keeping with all this, that if adversity has at any time befallen cities, the temples and the walls have equally shared in the disaster, so that it is clear to demonstration the thing was not the doing of the gods, seeing it also overtook themselves. The truth is, the human race has always deserved ill at God's hand. First of all, as undutiful to Him, because when it knew Him in part, it not only did not seek after Him, but even invented other gods of its own to worship; and further, because, as the result of their willing ignorance of the Teacher of righteousness, the Judge and Avenger of sin, all vices and crimes grew and flourished. But had men sought, they would have come to know the object of their seeking; and knowledge would have produced obedience, and obedience would have found a God, not of an angry God. They ought then to see that the very same God is angry with them now as in ancient times, but that Christians were so much as spoken of. It was His blessings they enjoyed · created before they made any of their gods, and why can they not take it in, that their evils come from the Being whose goodness they have failed to recognize? They suffer at the hands of Him to whom they have been ungrateful. And, for all that is said, if we compare the calamities of former times, they fall on us more lightly now, since God gave Christians to the world; for from that time virtue had some restraint on the world's wickedness, and men began to pray for the averting of God's wrath. In a word, when summer clouds give no rain, and the season is matter of anxiety, you indeed · full of feasting day by day, and ever eager for the banquet, baths and taverns and brothels always busy · offer up to Jupiter your rain-sacrifices; you have on the people barefoot processions; you seek heaven at the Capitol; you look up to the temple-ceilings for the longed-for clouds · God and heaven not in all your thoughts. We, dried up with fastings, and our passions bound up, holding back as long as possible from all the ordinary enjoyments of life, rolling in sackcloth and ashes, assailing heaven with our importunities · touch God's heart · and when we have extorted divine compassion, why, Jupiter, do you not give the honour! Chapter 41 You, therefore, are the sources of trouble in human affairs; on you lies the blame of punishment.

adversities, since you are ever attracting them · you by whom God is despised and images are worshipped. It surely seem the more natural thing to believe that it is the neglected One who is angry, and not they to whom a price is paid; or most unjustly they act, if, on account of the Christians, they send trouble on their own devotees, who are bound to keep clear of the punishments of Christians. But this, you say, hits your God as well, since He permits worshippers to suffer on account of those who dishonour Him. But admit first of all His providential arrangements, which will not make this retort. For He who once for all appointed an eternal judgment at the world's close, does not precipitate the separation, which is essential to judgment, before the end. Meanwhile He deals with all sorts of men alike, so that all together share His favours and reproofs. His will is, that outcasts and elect should have adversities and prosperities in common, that we should have all the same experience of His goodness and severity. Having these things from His own lips, we love His goodness, we fear His wrath, while both by you are treated with compassion and hence the sufferings of life, so far as it is our lot to be overtaken by them, are in our case gracious admonitions while in yours they are divine punishments. We indeed are not the least put about: for, first, only one thing in this life greatly concerns us, and that is, to get quickly out of it; and next, if any adversity befalls us, it is laid to the door of your transgressions. Nay, though we are likewise involved in troubles because of our close connection with you, we are rather glad of it, because we recognize in it divine foretellings, which, in fact, go to confirm the confidence and faith of our hope. But if all the evils you endure are inflicted on you by the gods you worship out of spite to us, why do you continue to pay homage to beings so ungrateful, and unjust; who, instead of being angry with you, should rather have been aiding and abetting you by persecuting Christians · keeping you clear of their sufferings.

Chapter 42 But we are called to account as harm-doers on another ground, and are accused of being useless to the world of life. How in all the world can that be the case with people who are living among you, eating the same food, wearing the same attire, having the same habits, under the same necessities of existence? We are not Indian Brahmins or Gymnosophists, who dwell in woods and exile themselves from ordinary human life. We do not forget the debt which we owe to God, our Lord and Creator; we reject no creature of His hands, though certainly we exercise restraint on ourselves, lest of any gift of His we make an immoderate or sinful use. So we sojourn with you in the world, about the forum, the streets, the public places, the baths, the theatres, the temples, the public squares, the markets, the workshops, the inns, the weekly markets, nor any other place of commerce. We sail with you, and fight with you, and till the ground with you; and in like manner we unite with you in your traffickings · even in the various arts we make public property of our works for your benefit. How it is we should be useless in your ordinary business, living with you and by you as we do, I am not able to understand. But if I do not frequent your religious ceremonies, I am still on the sacred day a man. I do not at the Saturnalia bathe myself in the public baths that I may not lose both day and night; yet I bathe at a decent and healthful hour, which preserves me both in body and blood. I can be rigid and pallid like you after ablution when I am dead. I do not recline in public at the feast of Bacchus, after the manner of the beast-fighters at their final banquet. Yet of your resources I partake, wherever I have a chance to eat. I do not buy a crown for my head. What matters it to you how I use them, if nevertheless the flowers are purchased? I think it more agreeable to have them free and loose, waving all about. Even if they are woven into a crown we smell the crown with our nostrils: let those look to it who scent the perfume with their hair. We do not go to the spectacles; yet the articles that are sold there, if I need them, I will obtain more readily at their proper places. We certainly buy no frankincense. If the Arabians complain of this, let the Sabæans be well assured that their more expensive and costly merchandise is expended as largely in the burying of Christians as in the fumigating of the gods. At all events, you say, the temple revenues are every day falling off: how few now throw in a contribution! In truth, we are not able to give alms both to your human and your heavenly mendicants; nor do we think that we are required to give to those who ask for it. Let Jupiter then hold out his hand and get, for our compassion spends more in the streets than yours does in the temples. But your other taxes will acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Christians; for in the scrupulous faithfulness which keeps us from fraud upon a brother, we make conscience of paying all their dues: so that, by ascertaining how much is lost by fraud and falsehood in the census declarations · the calculation may easily be made, it would be seen that the ground of complaint in one department of revenue is compensated by the advantage derived from the other.

Chapter 43 I will confess, however, without hesitation, that there are some who in a sense may complain against Christians that they are a sterile race: as, for instance, pimps, and panders, and bath-suppliers; assassins, and poisoners, and sorcerers; soothsayers, too, diviners, and astrologers. But it is a noble fruit of Christians, that they have no fruits for such as these. And yet, whatever loss your interests suffer from the religion we profess, the

protection you have from us makes amply up for it. What value do you set on persons, I do not here urge who from demons, I do not urge who for your sakes present prayers before the throne of the true God, for perhaps belief in that - but from whom you can have nothing to fear? Chapter 44 Yes, and no one considers what the loss of the common good - a loss as great as it is real, no one estimates the injury entailed upon the state, when, men of virtue as we are, we are put to death in such numbers; when so many of the truly good suffer the last penalty. If we call your own acts to witness, you who are daily presiding at the trials of prisoners, and passing sentence upon crimes. Well, in your long lists of those accused of many and various atrocities, has any assassin, any cutpurse, any man guilty of sacrilege, or seduction, or stealing bathers' clothes, his name entered as being a Christian too? If Christians are brought before you on the mere ground of their name, is there ever found among them an ill-doer of any sort? It is always with your folk the prison is steaming, the mines are sighing, the wild beasts are fed: it is from the exhibitors of gladiatorial shows always get their herds of criminals to feed up for the occasion. You find no Christian there, except simply as being such; or if one is there as something else, a Christian he is no longer. Chapter 45 We, then, alone are without crime. Is there ought wonderful in that, if it be a very necessity with us? For a necessity indeed it is. Taught of God himself what goodness is, we have both a perfect knowledge of it as revealed by a perfect Master; and faithfully we do His will, as enjoined on us by a Judge we dare not despise. But your inferior virtue you have got from mere human opinion; on human authority, too, its obligation rests: hence your system of practical morality is deficient, both in the fullness and authority requisite to produce a life of real virtue. Man's wisdom to point out what is good, is no greater than his authority to exact the keeping of it; the one is as easily deceived as the other is despised. And so, which is the ampler rule, to say, You shall not kill, or to teach, Be not even angry? Which is more perfect, to forbid adultery, or to restrain from even a single lustful look? Which indicates the higher intelligence, interdicting evil-doing, or evil-speaking? Which is more thorough, not allowing an injury, or not even suffering an injury done to you to be repaid? Though withal you know that these very laws also of yours seem to lead to virtue, have been borrowed from the law of God as the ancient model. Of the age of Moses we have spoken. But what is the real authority of human laws, when it is in man's power both to evade them, by general managing to hide himself out of sight in his crimes, and to despise them sometimes, if inclination or necessity lead him to offend? Think of these things, too, in the light of the brevity of any punishment you can inflict - never to last longer than till death. On this ground Epicurus makes light of all suffering and pain, maintaining that if it is small it is contemptible; and if it is great, it is not long-continued. No doubt about it, we, who receive our awards under the judgment of an all-seeing God, and who look forward to eternal punishment from Him for sin - we alone make effort to attain a blameless life, under the influence of our ampler knowledge, the impossibility of concealment, the greatness of the threatened torment, not merely long-enduring but everlasting, fearing Him, whom he too serves who the fearing judges, - even God, I mean, and not the proconsul. Chapter 46 We have sufficiently met, as I think, the accusation of the various crimes on the ground of which these fierce demands are made for Christian blood. We have given a full exhibition of our case; and we have shown you how we are able to prove that our statement is correct, from the trustworthiness, I mean, and antiquity of our sacred writings, and from the confession likewise of the powers of spiritual wickedness themselves. Who will venture to undertake our refutation; not with skill of words, but, as we have managed our demonstration, on the basis of reality? But while the truth we hold is made clear to all, unbelief meanwhile, at the very time it is convinced of the worth of Christianity, which has now become well known for its benefits as well as from the intercourse of life, takes up the notion that it is not really a thing divine, but rather a kind of philosophy. These are the very things, it says, the philosophers counsel and profess - innocence, justice, patience, sobriety, chastity. Why, then, are we not permitted an equal liberty and impunity for our doctrines as they have, with whom, in respect of what we teach, we are compared? Or why are not they, as so like us, not pressing the same offices, for declining which our lives are imperilled? For who compels a philosopher to sacrifice or take a vow or put out useless lamps at midday? Nay, they openly overthrow your gods, and in their writings they attack your superstitions; and you applaud them for it. Many of them even, with your countenance, bark out against your rulers are rewarded with statues and salaries, instead of being given to the wild beasts. And very right it should be so, if they are called philosophers, not Christians. This name of philosopher has no power to put demons to the rout, if they are not able to do that too? Since philosophers count demons inferior to gods. Socrates used to say, If the deities were in his permission. Yet he, too, though in denying the existence of your divinities he had a glimpse of the truth, at his

ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Æsculapius, I believe in honour of his father, for Apollo pronounced Socrates wisest of men. Thoughtless Apollo! Testifying to the wisdom of the man who denied the existence of his race. In proportion to the enmity the truth awakens, you give offense by faithfully standing by it; but the man who corrupts makes a mere pretence of it precisely on this ground gains favour with its persecutors. The truth which philosophers and these mockers and corrupters of it, with hostile ends merely affect to hold, and in doing so deprave, caring for not but glory, Christians both intensely and intimately long for and maintain in its integrity, as those who have a real concern about their salvation. So that we are like each other neither in our knowledge nor our ways, as you imagine. What certain information did Thales, the first of natural philosophers, give in reply to the inquiry of Cræsus regarding the Deity, the delay for further thought so often proving in vain? There is not a Christian workman but finds out God; he manifests Him, and hence assigns to Him all those attributes which go to constitute a divine being, though Plato says that it is far from easy to discover the Maker of the universe; and when He is found, it is difficult to make Him known to all. But if we challenge you to comparison in the virtue of chastity, I turn to a part of the sentence passed by the Athenians against Socrates, who was pronounced a corrupter of youth. The Christian confines himself to the female; he has read also how the harlot Phryne kindled in Diogenes the fires of lust, and how a certain Speusippus, of the Peripatetic school, perished in the adulterous act. The Christian husband has nothing to do with any but his own wife. Democritus, in putting out his eyes, because he could not look on women without lusting after them, and was pained if his passion was not satisfied, owns plainly, by the punishment he inflicts, his incontinence. But a Christian with grace-healed eyes is sightless in this matter; he is mentally blind against the assaults of passion. If I maintain our superior modest behaviour, there at once occurs to me Diogenes with filth-covered feet trampling on the proud couches of Plato; and the influence of another pride: the Christian does not even play the proud man to the pauper. If sobriety of spirit be the virtue in debate, why, there are Pythagoras at Thurii, and Zeno at Priene, ambitious of the supreme power: the Christian does not aspire to the ædileship. If equanimity be the contention, you have Lycurgus choosing death over self-starvation, because the Lacons had made some emendation of his laws: the Christian, even when he is crucified, gives thanks. If the comparison be made in regard to trustworthiness, Anaxagoras denied the deposit of his enemies; the Christian is noted for his fidelity even among those who are not of his religion. If the matter of sincerity is to be brought to trial, Aristotle basely thrust his friend Hermias from his place: the Christian does no harm even to his enemies. With equal baseness does Aristotle play the sycophant to Alexander, instead of exercising to keep him in the right; and Plato allows himself to be bought by Dionysius for his belly's sake. Aristippus in the purple, with all his great show of gravity, gives way to extravagance; and Hippias is put to death laying plots against the state: no Christian ever attempted such a thing in behalf of his brethren, even when persecution was scattering them abroad with such atrocity. But it will be said that some of us, too, depart from the rules of our discipline. In that case, however, we do not count them no longer Christians; but the philosophers who do such things retain still the name and the honour of philosophers. So, then, where is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? Between the disciple of Greece and the man of heaven? Between the man whose object is fame, and whose object is life? Between the talker and the doer? Between the man who builds up and the man who pulls down? Between the friend and the foe of error? Between one who corrupts and one who restores and teaches it? Between its chief and its custodier? Chapter 47 Unless I am utterly mistaken, there is nothing so old as the truth; and the already proved antiquity of the divine writings is so far of use to me, that it leads men more easily to take it in that they are the treasure-source whence all later wisdom has been taken. And if it not necessary to keep my work to a moderate size, I might launch forth also into the proof of this. What poet or sophist has not drunk at the fountain of the prophets? Thence, accordingly, the philosophers watered their arid minds, so that it is the things they have from us which bring us into comparison with them. For this reason, I imagine, that philosophy was banished by certain states - I mean by the Thebans, by the Spartans also, and the Argives - its doctrines sought to imitate our doctrines; and ambitious, as I have said, of glory and eloquence alone, if they fell upon any in the collection of sacred Scriptures which displeased them, in their own peculiar style of research, they perverted them to serve their purpose: for they had no adequate faith in their divinity to keep them from changing them, nor had they any sufficient understanding of them, either, as being still at the time under veil - even obscure to the Jews themselves, whose peculiar possession they seemed to be. For so, too, if the truth was distinguished by its simplicity, the more on that account the fastidiousness of man, too proud to believe, set to altering it; so that even what they found certain they made uncertain by their admixtures. Finding a simple revelation of God, they proceeded to corrupt it.

about Him, not as He had revealed to them, but turned aside to debate about His properties, His nature, His ability to be incorporeal; others maintain He has a body - the Platonists teaching the one doctrine, and the others the other. Some think that He is composed of atoms, others of numbers: such are the different views of Epicurus and Pythagoras. One thinks He is made of fire; so it appeared to Heraclitus. The Platonists, again, hold that He administers the affairs of the world; the Epicureans, on the contrary, that He is idle and inactive, and, so to speak, a nobody in human things. Then the Stoics represent Him as placed outside the world, and whirling round this huge mass of things like a potter; while the Platonists place Him within the world, as a pilot is in the ship he steers. So, in like manner, they differ in their views about the world itself, whether it is created or uncreated, whether it is destined to pass away or to remain forever. So again it is debated concerning the nature of the soul, which some contend is divine and eternal, while others hold that it is dissoluble. According to each one's fancy, He has introduced either something new or refashioned the old. Nor need we wonder if the speculations of philosophers have perverted the older Scriptures of their brood, with their opinions, have even adulterated our new-given Christian revelation, and corrupted it into a system of philosophic doctrines, and from the one path have struck off many and inexplicable by-roads. And I have alluded to this, lest any one becoming acquainted with the variety of parties among us, this might seem to him to be on a level with the philosophers, and he might condemn the truth from the different ways in which it is defended. I have at once put in a plea in bar against these tainters of our purity, asserting that this is the rule of truth which comes down from Christ by transmission through His companions, to whom we shall prove that those devisers of different doctrines are all posterior. Everything opposed to the truth has been got up from the truth itself, the spirits of error carrying on this system of opposition. By them all corruptions of wholesome discipline have been secretly instilled; and then, too, certain fables have been introduced, that, by their resemblance to the truth, they might impair its credibility, or vindicate their own higher claims to faith; so that people might think Christians unworthy of credit because the poets or philosophers are so, or might regard the poets and philosophers as worthier of confidence than their not being followers of Christ. Accordingly, we get ourselves laughed at for proclaiming that God will one day judge the world. For, like us, the poets and philosophers set up a judgment-seat in the realms below. And if we speak of Gehenna, which is a reservoir of secret fire under the earth for purposes of punishment, we have in the same way derision heaped on us. For so, too, they have their Pyriphlegethon, a river of flame in the regions of the dead. And when we speak of Paradise, the place of heavenly bliss appointed to receive the spirits of the saints, severed from the knowledge of this world by that fiery zone as by a sort of enclosure, the Elysian plains have taken possession of our faith. Whence is it, I pray you have all this, so like us, in the poets and philosophers? The reason simply is, that they have been taken from our religion. But if they are taken from our sacred things, as being of earlier date, than ours are the truer, and have higher claims upon belief, since even their imitations find faith among you. If they maintain their sacred mysteries to have sprung from their own minds, in that case ours will be reflections of what is later than themselves, which by the nature of things is impossible, for never does the shadow precede the body, nor casts it, or the image the reality. Chapter 48 Come now, if some philosopher affirms, as Laberius holds, following the opinion of Pythagoras, that a man may have his origin from a mule, a serpent from a woman, and with skill of speech twists every argument to prove his view, will he not gain acceptance for and work in some the conviction that, on account of this, they should even abstain from eating animal food? May any one have the persuasion that he should abstain, lest by chance in his beef he eats of some ancestor of his? But if a Christian promises the return of a man from a man, and the very actual Gaius from Gaius, the cry of the people will be to have him stoned; they will not so much as grant him a hearing. If there is any ground for the moving to and fro of human souls into different bodies, why may they not return into the very substance they have left, seeing this is to be restored, to be that which has been? They are no longer the very things they had been; for they could not be what they were not, without first being to be what they had been. If we were inclined to give all rein upon this point, discussing into what various beasts and another might probably be changed, we would need at our leisure to take up many points. But this we would not do in our own defense, as setting forth what is greatly worthier of belief, that a man will come back from a man - and not a given person from any given person, still retaining his humanity; so that the soul, with its qualities unchanged, is restored to the same condition, thought not to the same outward framework. Assuredly, as the reason why resurrection takes place at all is the appointed judgment, every man must needs come forth the very same who had once entered, he may receive at God's hands a judgment, whether of good desert or the opposite. And therefore the body too

appear; for the soul is not capable of suffering without the solid substance (that is, the flesh; and for this reason also) that it is not right that souls should have all the wrath of God to bear: they did not sin without the body, within which all was done by them. But how, you say, can a substance which has been dissolved be made to rise again? Consider yourself, O man, and you will believe in it! Reflect on what you were before you came into existence. For if you had been anything, you would have remembered it. You, then, who were nothing before you existed, nothing also when you cease to be, why may you not come into being again out of nothing, at the will of the same God whose will created you out of nothing at the first? Will it be anything new in your case? You who were not, were made; when you cease to be again, you shall be made. Explain, if you can, your original creation, and then demand that you shall be re-created. Indeed, it will be still easier surely to make you what you were once, when the very same creative power made you without difficulty what you never were before. There will be doubts, perhaps, as to the power of God, of Him who hung in its place this huge body of our world, made out of what had never existed, as from a void and emptiness and inanity, animated by the Spirit who quickens all living things, its very self the unmistakable type of resurrection, that it might be to you a witness - nay, the exact image of the resurrection. Light, every day extinguished, shines out again; and, with like alternation, darkness succeeds light's outgoing. The defunct stars re-live; the seasons, as soon as they are finished, renew their course; the fruits are brought to maturity, and then reproduced. The seeds do not spring up with abundant produce, save as they rot and dissolve away - all things are preserved by perishing, all things are refashioned out of death. You, man of nature so exalted, if you understand yourself, taught even by the Pythian words, lord of all these things that die and rise, - shall you die to perish evermore? Wherever your dissolution shall have taken place, whatever material agent has destroyed you, or swept you up, or swept you away, or reduced you to nothingness, it shall again restore you. Even nothingness is His who created all. You ask, Shall we then be always dying, and rising up from death? If so the Lord of all things had appointed, we would have to submit, though unwillingly, to the law of your creation. But, in fact, He has no other purpose than that of which He has informed us. The Reason which made the universe out of diverse elements, so that all things are composed of opposite substances in unity - of void and solid, of animate and inanimate, of comprehensible and incomprehensible, of light and darkness, of life itself and death - has also disposed time into order, by fixing an end and distinguishing its mode, according to which this first portion of it, which we inhabit from the beginning of the world, flows down by a temporal course to a close; but the portion which succeeds, and to which we look forward confidently forever. When, therefore, the boundary and limit, that millennial interspace, has been passed, when even the course of fashion of the world itself - which has been spread like a veil over the eternal economy, equally a thing of time and of eternity - passes away, then the whole human race shall be raised again, to have its dues meted out according as it has spent the period of good or evil, and thereafter to have these paid out through the immeasurable ages of eternity. Thereafter this there is neither death nor repeated resurrections, but we shall be the same that we are now, and still unchanged - the servants of God, ever with God, clothed upon with the proper substance of eternity; but the punishment of all who are not true worshippers of God, in like manner shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire. The fire which, from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility. The philosophers are familiar as well as we with the distinction between a common and a secret fire. Thus that which is in common use is far different from that which we see in divine judgments, whether striking as thunderbolts from heaven, or bursting up out of the earth through mountain-tops; for it does not consume what it scorches, but while it burns it repairs. So the mountains continue ever burning; and a person struck by lightning is even now kept safe from any destroying flame. A notable example of this of the fire eternal! A notable example of the endless judgment which still supplies punishment with fuel! The mountains burn, and last. How will it be with the wicked and the enemies of God? Chapter 49 These are what I call presumptuous speculations in our case alone; in the philosophers and poets they are regarded as sublime speculations and illustrious discoveries. They are men of wisdom, we are fools. They are worthy of all honour, we are folk to have our finger pointed at; nay, besides that, we are even to have punishments inflicted on us. But let things which are to the defense of virtue, if you will, have no foundation, and give them duly the name of fancies, yet still they are necessary; let them be absurd if you will, yet they are of use: they make all who believe them better men and virtuous under the fear of never-ending punishment and the hope of never-ending bliss. It is not, then, wise to brand as absurd nor to regard as absurd, things the truth of which it is expedient to presume. On no ground is it right positively to condemn as bad what beyond all doubt is profitable. Thus, in fact, you are guilty of the very presumption of which

accuse us, in condemning what is useful. It is equally out of the question to regard them as nonsensical; at any rate, if they are false and foolish, they hurt nobody. For they are just (in that case) like many other things on which you inflict no penalties - foolish and fabulous things, I mean, which, as quite innocuous, are never charged as crimes and punished. But in a thing of the kind, if this be so indeed, we should be adjudged to ridicule, not to swords, and to flames, and crosses, and wild beasts, in which iniquitous cruelty not only the blinded populace exults and insults us, but in which some of you too glory, not scrupling to gain the popular favour by your injustice. As though all that you can do to us did not depend upon our pleasure. It is assuredly a matter of my own inclination, being a Christian, that my condemnation, then, will only reach me in that case, if I wish to be condemned; but when all you can do to me, which I do only at my will, all you can do is dependent on my will, and is not in your power. The joy of the people in our trouble is therefore utterly reasonless. For it is our joy they appropriate to themselves, since we would far rather be condemned than apostatize from God; on the contrary, our haters should be sorry rather than rejoice, as we have made of the very thing of our own choice. Chapter 50 In that case, you say, why do you complain of our persecutions? Why rather to be grateful to us for giving you the sufferings you want. Well, it is quite true that it is our desire to suffer, but it is in the way that the soldier longs for war. No one indeed suffers willingly, since suffering necessarily implies fear and danger. Yet the man who objected to the conflict, both fights with all his strength, and when victorious, he rejoices in the battle, because he reaps from it glory and spoil. It is our battle to be summoned before your tribunals that there, under fear of execution, we may battle for the truth. But the day is won when the object of the struggle is gained. This victory of ours gives us the glory of pleasing God, and the spoil of life eternal. But we are overcome. Yes, when we have obtained our wishes. Therefore we conquer in dying; we go forth victorious at the time we are subdued. Call us, if you like, Sarmenticii and Semaxii, because, bound to a half-axle stake, we are piled up in a circle-heap of fagots. This is the attitude in which we conquer, it is our victory-robe, it is for us a sort of triumphal car. Naturally enough, therefore, we do not please the vanquished; on account of this, indeed, we are called a desperate, reckless race. But the very desperation and recklessness you object to in us, among yourselves is the standard of virtue in the cause of glory and of fame. Mucius of his own will left his right hand on the altar: what a sublimity of mind! Empedocles gave his whole body at Catania to the fires of Ætna: what mental resolution! A Carthaginian foundress of Carthage gave herself away in second marriage to the funeral pile: what a noble witness of her courage! Regulus, not wishing that his one life should count for the lives of many enemies, endured these crosses over his frame: how brave a man - even in captivity a conqueror! Anaxarchus, when he was being beaten to death by a barley-pounder, cried out, Beat on, beat on at the case of Anaxarchus; no stroke falls on Anaxarchus himself. I omit the magnanimity of the philosopher, who even in such an end had jokes upon his lips! I omit all reference to those who, by their own sword, or with any other milder form of death, have bargained for glory. Nay, see how even torture and death are crowned by you. The Athenian courtesan, having wearied out the executioner, at last bit off her tongue and died in the face of the raging tyrant, that she might at the same time spit away her power of speech, nor be longer able to confess her fellow-conspirators, if even overcome, that might be her inclination. Zeno the Eleatic, when he was tortured by Dionysius what good philosophy did, on answering that it gave contempt of death, was all unquailing, given over to the tyrant's scourge, and sealed his opinion even to the death. We all know how the Spartan lash, applied with the same cruelty under the very eyes of friends encouraging, confers on those who bear it honor proportionate to the blood of the young men shed. O glory legitimate, because it is human, for whose sake it is counted neither reckless nor foolhardiness, nor desperate obstinacy, to despise death itself and all sorts of savage treatment; for whose sake you may for your native place, for the empire, for friendship, endure all you are forbidden to do for God! And you call for statues in honour of persons such as these, and you put inscriptions upon images, and cut out epitaphs on tombstones, that their names may never perish. In so far you can by your monuments, you yourselves afford a sort of resurrection to the dead. Yet he who expects the true resurrection from God, is insane, if for God he suffers! But go zealously on, you presidents, you will stand higher with the people if you sacrifice the Christians at their wish, kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust; your injustice is the proof that we are innocent. Therefore God suffers that we should suffer; for but very lately, in condemning a Christian woman to the leno rather than to the leo you made confession, a taint on our purity is considered among us something more terrible than any punishment and any death. Nor is the cruelty, however exquisite, avail you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more numerous we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. Many of your writers exhort to the courageous bearing of pain.

death, as Cicero in the Tusculans, as Seneca in his Chances, as Diogenes, Pyrrhus, Callinicus; and yet their v
not find so many disciples as Christians do, teachers not by words, but by their deeds. That very obstinacy you
against is the preceptress. For who that contemplates it, is not excited to inquire what is at the bottom of it? Wh
after inquiry, does not embrace our doctrines? And when he has embraced them, desires not to suffer that he
partaker of the fullness of God's grace, that he may obtain from God complete forgiveness, by giving in exchan
blood? For that secures the remission of all offenses. On this account it is that we return thanks on the very sp
your sentences. As the divine and human are ever opposed to each other, when we are condemned by you, w
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