

BOOK FOURTH

THEN FOLLOWS A PERIOD OF NINE YEARS FROM THE NINETEENTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, DURING WHICH, HAVING LOST A FRIEND, HE FOLLOWED THE MANICHÆANS—AND WROTE BOOKS ON THE FAIR AND FIT, AND PUBLISHED A WORK ON THE LIBERAL ARTS, AND THE CATEGORIES OF ARISTOTLE.

CHAP. I.—*Concerning that most unhappy time in which he, being deceived, deceived others; and concerning the mockers of his confession.*

I. DURING this space of nine years, then, from my nineteenth to my eight and twentieth year, we went on seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving, in divers lusts; publicly, by sciences which they style “liberal”—secretly, with a falsity called religion. Here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain! Here, striving after the emptiness of popular fame, even to theatrical applauses, and poetic contests, and strifes for grassy garlands, and the follies of shows and the intemperance of desire. There, seeking to be purged from these our corruptions by carrying food to those who were called “elect” and “holy,” out of which, in the laboratory of their stomachs, they should make for us angels and gods, by whom we might be delivered. These things did I follow eagerly, and practise with my friends—by me and with me deceived. Let the arrogant, and such as have not been yet savingly cast down and stricken by Thee, O my God, laugh at me; but notwithstanding I would confess to Thee mine own shame in Thy praise. Bear with me, I beseech Thee, and give me grace to retrace in my present remembrance the circlings of my past errors, and to “offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.” For what am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to mine own downfall? Or what am I even at the best, but one sucking Thy milk, and feeding upon Thee, the meat that per-