

TERTULLIAN : APOLOGY

I. If you, the magistrates of the Roman Empire,— 1
you, who, in the light of day, set on high, at the very
head of the state, preside to do justice,—if you are
not allowed openly to investigate, face to face to
examine, the Christian issue, to learn what it is in
truth ;—if, in this phase of life, and this alone, your
authority either dreads or blushes to inquire in public,
with all the care that Justice demands ;—if finally (as
recently befell) persecution of this school is so busy in
the domestic tribunal^a as to block the way of defence ;
—then let truth be allowed to reach your ears at
least by the hidden path of silent literature.

Truth asks no favours in her cause, since she has no 2
surprise at her present position. Truth knows that
she is a stranger on earth and easily finds enemies
among men of another allegiance, but she knows that
her race, home, hope, recompense, honour, are in
heaven. For one thing meanwhile she is eager—not
to be condemned without being known. The laws are 3
supreme in their own sphere ; what loss can they
suffer, if Truth be heard ? Why, would it not en-
hance the glory of their supremacy to condemn Truth
after hearing her ? But, if they condemn her un-
heard—let us set on one side the odium such injustice
will incur—they will rouse the suspicion that they

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have some secret sense that they are unjust, when they refuse to hear what, once heard, they cannot condemn.

This, then, is the first plea we lodge with you—the 4
injustice of your hatred of the Christian name. The
very excuse that seems to acquit it, at once aggravates
and convicts that injustice—to wit, ignorance. For
what could be more unjust than for men to hate a
thing they do not know, even though it really de-
serves hatred? It can only deserve hatred when it
is known whether it does deserve it. But so long as 5
nothing at all is known of its deserts, how can you
defend the justice of the hatred? That must be
established, not on the bare fact of its existence,
but on knowledge. When men hate a thing simply
because they do not know the character of what they
hate, what prevents it being of a nature that does
not deserve hate at all? Whichever alternative you
choose, we maintain both points: they are ignorant
so long as they hate, and their hate is unjust so long
as they are ignorant. It is evidence of an ignorance 6
which, while it is made an excuse for their injustice,
really condemns it, that all who once hated Christian-
ity because they were ignorant of the nature of what
they hated, so soon as they cease to be ignorant of it,
leave off hating it. From their number come the
Christians; it is on the basis of knowledge, nothing
else; and they begin to hate what once they were
and to profess what once they hated; and we are as
many as we are alleged to be. Men proclaim aloud 7
that the state is beset with us; in countryside, in
villages, in islands, Christians; every sex, age, con-
dition, yes! and rank going over to this name. They 8
lament it as an injury; and yet even so they do not

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bestir their minds to reflect whether there may not be in it something good that escapes them. No! it is forbidden to guess more shrewdly; it does not please them to test it at closer quarters. Here, and here alone, human curiosity grows torpid. They love to be 9 ignorant, though others rejoice to know. How much better the saying of Anacharsis about the ignorant judging the expert would have fitted them, than the unmusical who judge the musicians!^a They prefer not to know because they already hate. Their prejudice implies that what they do not know really is what, if they were to know, they could not hate. Because, if no just ground for hatred be found, surely it is best to leave off hating unjustly. But if the hatred prove to be deserved, so far from any of it being abated, more hatred should be added to keep it up; and Justice itself would endorse it.

But, says he, a thing is not necessarily good 10 because it wins many adherents; how many are predisposed to evil, how many desert to error! Who denies that? Yet a thing that is really bad, not even those who are caught by it dare to defend or to call good. Nature steeps every evil thing with either fear or shame. Why, evil-doers are eager 11 to escape notice; they avoid appearing; they are anxious when caught; they deny when accused; even under torture they do not easily or always confess; at all events, when condemned they lament. They tell how often they have felt the impulses of a mind distraught^b; they set their deeds down to fate or to the stars; they will not admit to be their own what they recognize as evil. But look at the Chris- 12 tians! There you have quite another story; not a man of them is ashamed of it, not a man regrets—

unless, indeed, that he was not a Christian earlier. If he is denounced [as a Christian], he glories in it; if he is accused, he does not defend himself; when he is questioned, he confesses without any pressure; when he is condemned, he renders thanks.^a What sort of 13
 evil is that which has none of the native marks of evil—fear, shame, shuffling, regret, lament? What? is that evil where the criminal is glad, where accusation is the thing he prays for, and punishment is his felicity? It is not for you to call it madness—you, a man convicted of sheer ignorance of it.

II. But now, if it is really certain that we are of all 1
 men the most criminal, why do you yourselves treat us otherwise than those like us, the rest of the criminal classes, when the same treatment belongs to the same fault? Whatever you charge against us, 2
 when you so charge others, they use their own eloquence, they hire the advocacy of others, to prove their innocence. There is freedom to answer, to cross-question, since in fact it is against the law for men to be condemned, undefended and unheard. But to Christians alone it is forbidden to say any- 3
 thing to clear their case, to defend Truth, to save the judge from being unjust. No! one thing is looked for, one alone, the one thing needful for popular hatred—the confession of the name. Not investiga-
 tion of the charge! Yet, if you are trying any other 4
 criminal, it does not follow at once from his confessing to the name of murderer, or temple-robber, or adulterer, or enemy of the state (to touch on *our* indictments!), that you are satisfied to pronounce sentence, unless you pursue all the consequent investigation, such as the character of the act, how often, where, how, when, he did it, his accessories, his

confederates. In our case nothing of the kind! Yet 5
it ought just as much to be wrung out of us (when-
ever that false charge is made) how many murdered
babies each of us had tasted, how many acts of incest
he had done in the dark, what cooks were there—yes,
and what dogs.^a Oh! the glory of that magistrate
who had brought to light some Christian who had
eaten up to date a hundred babies!

And yet we find it is forbidden even to hunt us 6
down. For when Plinius Secundus was governing
his province and had condemned some Christians
and driven others from their steadfastness, and
still the sheer numbers concerned worried him
as to what he ought to do thereafter, he consulted
the Emperor Trajan.^b He asserted that, apart
from an obstinacy that refused to sacrifice, he
had learnt nothing about the Christian mysteries—
nothing beyond meetings before dawn to sing to
Christ and to God, and to band themselves together in
discipline, forbidding murder, adultery, dishonesty,
treachery, and the other crimes. Trajan replied in a 7
rescript that men of this kind were not to be sought
out, but if they were brought before Pliny they
must be punished. What a decision, how inevitably 8
entangled! He says they must not be sought out,
implying they are innocent; and he orders them to be
punished, implying they are guilty. He spares them
and rages against them, he pretends not to see
and punishes. Why cheat yourself with your judge-
ment? If you condemn them, why not hunt them

Fathers, part ii. vol. i. p. 55, on the genuineness of the letter,
quoting Renan on the improbability of a Christian forger
being able “si admirablement imiter la langue précieuse et
raffinée de Pline.”

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down? If you do not hunt them down, why not also acquit them? To track down bandits through all the provinces is a duty assigned by lot to the garrisons. Against those guilty of treason, against public enemies, every man is a soldier; inquiry is extended to confederates, to accessories. The 9 Christian alone may not be hunted down; but he may be haled before the magistrate; as if hunting down led to anything but haling to the court. So you condemn a man when haled to court—a man whom nobody wished to be sought out, who (I suppose) really has not deserved punishment because he is guilty, but because, forbidden to be looked for, he was found!

Then, again, in that matter, you do not deal with 10 us in accordance with your procedure in judging criminals. If the other criminals plead Not guilty, you torture them to make them confess; the Christians alone you torture to make them deny. Yet if it were something evil, we should deny our guilt, and you would use torture to force us to confess it. For you would not hold judicial investigation of our crimes needless, on the ground that you were certain of their commission from the confession of the name; for to this day, though the murderer confesses, and though you know what murder is, none the less you rack out of him the story of his crime. So much the 11 more upside down is your procedure with us, when you presume our crimes from our confession of the name and then try by torture to force us to cancel our confession, in order that, by denying the name, we may really deny the crimes too, which you had presumed from our confession of the name. But, of 12 course,^a I suppose you do not want us to be done to

death—though you believe us the worst of men. For that is your way—to say to the murderer, “Deny!” and to order the temple-thief to be mangled,^a if he will insist on confession! If that is not your procedure^b with regard to us in our guilt, then it is clear you count us the most innocent of men, when you will not have us (as being the most innocent of men) persist with a confession which you know you will have to condemn, not because justice requires it, but of necessity.

A man shouts, “I am a Christian.” He says 13 what he is. You, sir, wish to hear what he is *not*. Presiding to extort the truth, you take infinite pains in our case, and ours alone, to hear a lie. “I am,” says he, “what you ask if I am; why torture me to twist the fact round? I confess, and you torture me. What would you do if I denied?” Clearly, when others deny, you do not readily believe them; if we have denied, you at once believe us. Let this 14 topsy-turvy dealing of yours suggest to you the suspicion that there may be some hidden power which makes tools of you against the form, yes, against the very nature, of judicial procedure, against the laws themselves into the bargain. For, unless I am mistaken, the laws bid evil men to be brought to light, not hidden; they enact that those confessing be condemned, not acquitted. This is laid down by decrees of the Senate, by rescripts of the Emperors. This Empire of which you are ministers is the rule of citizens, not of tyrants. With tyrants torture was 15 also used as penalty; with you, it is moderated and used for examination only. Maintain your law by it till the necessary confession is made. If it is forestalled by confession, it serves no purpose. It is the

sentence that is called for then ; the guilty man must cancel the penalty due by enduring it, not by being relieved of it. No, nobody desires to acquit him ; it 16 is not permissible to wish it ; that is why no man is forced to deny [his guilt]. But the Christian, a man guilty of every crime, the enemy of gods, emperors, laws, morals, of all Nature together—so you conceive of him ; and then you force him to deny the charge, in order to acquit him—a man you will not be able to acquit unless he has denied. You are play- 17 ing fast and loose with the laws. You want him, then, to deny that he is guilty, in order to *make* him innocent—and quite against his will, too, by now ; and even his past is not to count against him. What is the meaning of this confusion ? this failure to reflect that more credence is to be given to a voluntary confession than to a forced denial ? to reflect that, when compelled to deny, he may not honestly deny ; and, once acquitted, he may again after your tribunal laugh at your enmity, once more a Christian ?

So, when in every detail you treat us differently 18 from all other criminals—as you do in concentrating on the one object of dissociating us from that name (for we are dissociated from it, if we do what men not Christians do ^a)—you can gather that the gravamen of the case is not any crime but a name. This name, a certain rational agency,^b rival in its operation, assails, with the prime motive that men may be unwilling to know for certain, what they certainly know they do not know.^c So they believe things about us which 19 are not proved ; and they are unwilling for inquiry to be made, in case things they prefer to have believed should be proved untrue ; and the object is that the name, which is the enemy of that rival

agency, may, because of crimes presumed but not proven, be condemned simply on its own confession. So we are tortured when we confess; we are punished when we persist; we are acquitted when we deny; all because the battle is for a name. Finally, in reading the charge, why do you call the 20 man a Christian, why not a murderer too, if a Christian is a murderer? Why not incestuous? or anything else you believe us to be? Or is it that in our case, and ours alone, it shames you, or vexes you, to use the actual names of our crimes? If a Christian, with no charge laid against him, is defendant because of a name, how shocking the name must be, if the charge consist of a name and nothing more.

III. Well, then, what does it mean, when most 1 people shut their eyes and run so blindfold into hatred of that name, that, even if they bear favourable testimony to a man, they throw in some detestation of the name? "A good man," they say, "this Caius Seius, only that he is a Christian." Then another says: "I am surprised that that wise man, Lucius Titius, has suddenly become a Christian." Nobody reflects whether Caius is good, and Lucius sensible, just because he is a Christian, or is a Christian because he is sensible and good. They praise what 2 they know and blame what they don't know; and their knowledge they spoil with their ignorance; though it is fairer to prejudge what is hidden by what is manifest, than to condemn in advance what is manifest because of what is hidden. In other cases, 3 persons known before they had the name to have been vagabond, worthless, and wicked, they condemn and praise in one breath; in the blindness of hate they stumble into commendation. "What a woman!

how wanton, how frolicsome ! What a young man ! how wanton, how gallant ! They have become Christians." So the name follows the reformation as a fresh charge. Some men go further, bartering their own 4 advantage against this hatred, content to suffer loss, provided they do not have at home what they hate. The wife is chaste now ; but the husband has ceased to be jealous, and has turned her out. The son is now submissive ; but the father, who used to bear with his ways, has disinherited him. The slave is faithful now ; but the master, once so gentle, has banished him from his sight. As sure as a man is reformed by the name, he gives offence. The advantage does not balance the hatred felt for Christians.

Tell me, then, if it is hatred of a name, how can you 5 indict names ? What charge can lie against words, unless the pronunciation of some name has a barbarous sound about it—something unlucky or scurrilous or lewd ? " Christian," so far as translation goes, is derived from " anointing." Yes, and when it is mispronounced by you " Chrestian " (for you have not even certain knowledge of the mere name) it is framed from " sweetness " or " kindness." 6 So in innocent men you hate even the innocent name.

Ah, but the school is in fact hated for the name of 6 its founder ! What novelty is it, if some way of life gives its followers a name drawn from their teacher ? Are not the philosophers called after their founders—Platonists, Epicureans, Pythagoreans ? yes, and from the places where they gathered, where they name) than *Christos*, which is a translation of a word quite foreign to them.

took their stand—Stoics, Academics ? and physicians in the same way from Erasistratus,^a and grammarians from Aristarchus^b—cooks too from Apicius^c? Yet 7 nobody is ever offended by the avowal of a name, handed down with his teaching from the teacher. Clearly, if a man has proved the school a bad one and its founder as bad, he will prove the bad name also to be worthy of hate because of the guilt of the school and the founder. So before you hated the name, it would have been proper first to judge the school in the light of the founder, or the founder in the light of the school. But, as things are, inquiry as to both and 8 knowledge of both are allowed to slide ; the name is picked out ; the name is the object of attack. The school is unknown ; the founder is unknown ; a word of itself condemns both in advance—because they bear a name, not because they are convicted of anything.

IV. So much, then, by way of preface as it were, to 1 assail the injustice that is in the general hatred felt for us. Now I will take my stand on the plea of our innocence. I will not only refute the charges brought against us, but I will turn them against those who bring them ; so that, in this too, all may learn that they will not find in Christians what they are unaware of in themselves, and that at the same time they may blush to accuse—no, I will not say that the worst of men are accusing the best, but I will put it, as they would wish, and say—their equals. We will reply 2 in detail as to the crimes we are alleged to commit in secret, but which we find them openly committing—

on cookery (in ten books) compiled some centuries later ; *cf.* Wight Duff, *Lit. Hist. Rome Silver Age*, p. 131, who finds it surprising and ill-written.

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matters in which we are set down as guilty, empty-headed, damnable, ridiculous.

Truth, which is ours, meets all the charges ; and 3 yet, in the last resort, the authority of the laws is cited against her—to the effect, either that, after the laws have spoken, there is (they say) no re-opening the matter, or that necessity of obedience, though you regret it, takes precedence of truth ; in view of all which I will meet you, as guardians of the laws, on the legal issue first. To begin, then : when you harshly cut 4 the case short by saying, “ Your existence is illegal^a ” ; when you lay it down without any more humane reconsideration, your dictum means mere force, an unjust tyranny from the citadel^b—if you say a thing is not lawful simply because that is your will, and not because it *ought* not to be lawful. If, because a 5 thing *ought* not to be lawful, you therefore wish it not to be lawful, all will agree that what is ill done ought not to be lawful—a principle which involves a presumption that what is a right thing to do is lawful. If I find that to be good which your law has forbidden, does not that presumption imply that the law cannot forbid me to do it, since it would only rightly forbid it if it were bad ? If your law has made a mistake, well, I think, it was the creation of man ; it did not come down from heaven.

Do you wonder that a man may have made a mis- 6 take in framing a law, or returned to sense in disallowing his law ? Is it not the fact that the laws of Lycurgus himself were altered by the Spartans and that this caused their author such grief that he withdrew and condemned himself to starve to death ? Yes, and you 7 yourselves, as experiment every day lightens the darkness of antiquity, do *you* not lop and fell all that old and

squalid jungle of laws with the new axes of imperial rescripts and edicts? Why, those absurd Papian laws^a 8 which require people to have children at an earlier age than the Julian laws require them to be married—did not the valiant Emperor Severus clear them out but yesterday for all their old age and authority? Yes, and the laws had it of old that the debtor should 9 on being sentenced be cut up by the creditors; yet by common agreement that cruelty was erased, and for the punishment of death there was substituted a mark of disgrace; the confiscation of his goods that was applied meant a preference for the blush spread rather than the blood shed.^b

How many of your laws lie forgotten, still to be 10 reformed? What recommends a law is not the number of its years nor the dignity of its makers, but its equity and nothing else. So when laws are recognized to be unjust, they are deservedly condemned, even if they do condemn. But why do we say un- 11 just? I will go further, and, if they punish a name, I will say silly. If it is deeds they punish, why in our case do they punish deeds on the score of the name alone, while in the case of others they must have them proved not from a name but from an act committed? I am incestuous, say they; why do they not inquire into it? If it be murder of babies, why do they not torture the fact from me? I commit something against a god or a Caesar, why, when I am able to clear my character, am I not heard? No law forbids 12 the investigation of the act, of which it forbids the commission. The judge does not justly avenge, unless he knows that the unlawful act was committed; nor does the citizen faithfully obey the law, if he does not know what sort of act the law avenges. A law 13

does not owe to itself alone a sure sense of its own justice ; it owes it to those from whom it expects obedience. Contrariwise, a law is suspect which is unwilling to be examined—yes, and bad, if without such examination it tyrannizes.

V. A word of discussion on the origin of laws on this 1
 matter. There was an ancient decree, that no god
 should be consecrated by an imperator without the
 approval of the Senate. M. Aemilius knows about
 that law in the matter of his god, Alburnus.^a It bears
 also on our case, because among you a god's divinity
 depends on man's decision. Unless a god please man,
 he shall not be a god at all ; in fact, man must be
 gracious to god ! It was in the age of Tiberius, then, 2
 that the Christian name went out into the world, and
 he referred to the Senate the news which he had re-
 ceived^b from Syria Palestine, which had revealed the
 truth of Christ's (*ipsius*) divinity ; he did this exercis-
 ing his prerogative in giving it his endorsement. The
 Senate had not approved beforehand and so re-
 jected it. Caesar held to his opinion and threatened
 danger to accusers of the Christians. Consult your 3
 histories. There you will find that Nero was the
 first to rage with the imperial sword against this
 school in the very hour of its rise in Rome.^c But
 we glory—nothing less than glory—to have had such
 a man to inaugurate our condemnation. One who

pronounces Gibbon and others who reject the story " wiser
 in their day " than those who accepted it. It seems to have
 been an inference (perhaps from the ways of the Civil Service
 at the end of the second century) that Pilate must have
 written to Tiberius ; few will suppose that the document was
 actually seen among archives. The rest of the story would
 appear to be largely inference from inference, or mere
 guesswork.

^a See Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44. 3.

knows Nero can understand that, unless a thing were good—and very good—it was not condemned by Nero. · Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero 4 in cruelty, attempted it ; but, being in some degree human, he ^a soon stopped what he had begun, and restored those he had banished. Such are ever our persecutors—men unjust, impious, foul—men whom you yourselves are accustomed to condemn ; and those whom they condemn you have become accustomed to restore. But from among so many em- 5 perors down to to-day, men wise in things divine and human, pick me out one who warred against the Christians !

We, however, on the other side, produce a pro- 6 tector, if you will refer to the letters of M. Aurelius, most venerable of Emperors, in which he testifies that the great drought in Germany was broken by rain obtained through the prayers of Christians, who, as it chanced, were among his soldiers.^b M. Aurelius, indeed, did not openly remove the penalty from Christians, but in another way as openly he got rid of it by attaching a condemnation to their accusers, and a harsher one too.^c What sort of laws, then, are those 7 which are only used against us by the impious, the unjust, the foul, the fierce, the vain, the demented ? laws which Trajan in part frustrated by forbidding Christians to be sought out,^d laws which never a Hadrian, though the explorer of everything curious, enforced, never a Vespasian though he warred ^e against the Jews, never a Pius, never a Verus.^f Yet 8

Pliny, *Epp.* x. 96, 97 ; and ch. 2. 6 of this work. The quotation is not too exact.

^a Notice the recurrence of this word from above, § 5.

^f Perhaps with a play on the meaning of the names.

I should think "the worst of men"^a might more easily be judged worthy of extermination by the best of men—their enemies, you might say—rather than by their fellows!

VI. But now I will ask those most religious protectors and maintainers of laws and ancestral usages to answer as to their loyalty, as to the honour and obedience they render to the decrees of their ancestors—if they have abandoned none of them—if in nothing they have deviated from them—if they have not obliterated matters necessary to discipline and most proper to it. Where have those laws gone ² that limit luxury and ostentation? the laws that forbade more than 100 *asses* to be allowed for a banquet or more than one fowl to be set on the table, and that fowl not fattened either? the laws that dealt with a patrician because he had ten pounds weight of silver plate, and, on the grave indictment of aspiring too high, removed him from the Senate? the laws which, when theatres first rose for the depravation of morals, at once destroyed them? the laws which did not allow the insignia of rank and honourable birth to be lightly used or with impunity? For I see "centenary" banquets, so-called from the ³ 100,000 sesterces they cost. I see—it would be little if it were the work of senators and not of freedmen or of whip-spoilers^b—I see whole silver-mines turned into dishes. I see theatres—and a single theatre here or there will not suffice—not uncovered, either. For—oh! it was for the games that the Spartans first invented the cloak,^c in case unclean pleasure should be cold in winter! I see, between matrons and harlots, not a vestige of distinction in dress left. Really, ⁴ as regards women, the usages of our ancestors have lapsed that

protected modesty or sobriety, when no woman knew gold save on one finger, which her betrothed pledged to himself with the engagement ring ; when women abstained so entirely from wine that when a matron once unlocked the wine cellar, her family made her starve to death. Why, under Romulus, a woman who had touched wine was killed with impunity by Metennius her husband. That was why they were 5 compelled to offer to kiss their relatives—that they might be judged by their breath. Where is that 6 happiness of marriage, so prospered I think by morals, that, in the six hundred years following the foundation of Rome, no house registered a divorce ? But nowadays among women no limb of the body but is heavy with gold ; wine forbids the free kiss ; divorce—divorce by now is prayed for, as if it were the proper sequel of marriage.

To come next to your gods themselves, the decrees 7 which your fathers prudently enacted, you, the most law-abiding of men, have repealed. Father Bacchus and his mysteries,—the consuls with the approval of the Senate turned him not only out of the City but out of the whole of Italy. Serapis and Isis and Harpo- 8 crates^a with his Dog-head^b were forbidden the Capitol—in other words, expelled from the Assembly of the gods ; and Piso and Gabinius—consuls, not Christians, I think—actually overturned their altars and banished them, in the endeavour to restrain the vices that go with foul and idle superstitions. You have restored them and bestowed on them supreme majesty. Where is the religious awe, where is the 9 veneration owed by you to your ancestors ? In dress, habit of life, furniture, feeling, yes ! and speech, you have renounced your great-grandfathers ! You are

for ever praising antiquity, and every day you improvise some new way of life. All of which goes to prove that, while you abandon the good usages of your ancestors, you keep and maintain the practices you should not have, and what you should have kept you have not maintained. In fact, as to that very point 10 of ancestral tradition, which you think you most faithfully guard, which above all else you have used to mark down the Christians as law-breakers,—I mean the passion for worshipping the gods, (and that is where antiquity made its worst mistake^a)—though you may have rebuilt his altars for Serapis Romanized, though you may make an offering of your frenzy to Bacchus Italianate—I will show in its proper place that you despise, neglect and destroy that tradition, clean against the authority of your ancestors. For 11 the moment I will make my reply to the infamy of our secret crimes, to clear my way to deal with those which are more conspicuous.^b

VII. We are said to be the most criminal of men, 1 on the score of our sacramental baby-killing and the baby-eating that goes with it and the incest that follows the banquet, where the dogs^c are our pimps in the dark, forsooth, and make a sort of decency for guilty lusts by overturning the lamps. That, at all events, is what you always say about us; and yet you take no pains to bring into the daylight what you have been saying about us all this long time. Then, I say, either bring it out, if you believe all this, or refuse to believe it after leaving it uninvestigated. Your habit of looking the other way 2

^c The dogs were supposed to be tied to the candles; food thrown to them; and the sudden movement made the room dark.

constitutes a demurrer in the case, a presumption that the thing is not there at all, which not even you yourselves dare to try to bring out. It is quite a different task that you enjoin on the executioner against the Christians,—not to make them say what they do, but deny what they are.

This way of life dates, as we have already said, 3 from the reign of Tiberius. Truth and hatred of truth start together ; as soon as it has appeared, it begins to be disliked. Count the outsiders, and you count its enemies—the Jews its proper enemies from rivalry, the soldiers for blackmail, while it is nature itself that makes the home circle our enemies.^a Every day 4 we stand siege ; every day we are betrayed ; above all in our gatherings and our assemblies we are surprised. Who yet, I ask, came upon a baby wailing, 5 as they say ? Who ever kept for the judge's sight the jaws of Cyclops and Siren, bloodstained as he had found them ? Who, again, found in our wives the traces of impurity ? Who discovered such crimes and concealed them, or sold his discovery,^b with his hands on the persons of the guilty ? If we always escape detection, when was our wicked conduct betrayed ?

Yes, tell me, by whom the betrayal could have 6 been made ? Not, I should think, by the guilty themselves ; since in all mysteries the very fact that they are mysteries requires the pledge of silence. The mysteries of Samothrace and Eleusis remain unspoken. How much more such mysteries as these, whose betrayal will provoke man's vengeance at once, with God's in reserve ? Well, if 7 they are not their own betrayers, it follows that outsiders must betray them. And where do the outsiders get their information, when initiations, even pious

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ones, always bid the profane avaunt, and guard against observers? Or do you suggest that the impious are less afraid?

Everybody knows the nature of Rumour. It is 8
in your literature :

Rumour, a curse, and swiftest of all curses.^a

Why is Rumour a curse? Because she is swift? Because she is an informer? Or because she is generally a liar? Why, Rumour, even when she does bring a bit of truth, does not quite escape from her vice of lying; she subtracts from the Truth, adds to it, alters it. What? Surely the terms of her existence are 9 that she only survives while she lies, and only lives so long as she fails to prove her tale. When she has proved it, she ceases to be Rumour; and, as if she had completed her task of telling, she gives us fact; and, after that, it is fact that is held, and fact it is called; 10 nor does anybody say, for example, "They say this occurred at Rome," or "Rumour is that so and so is assigned the province," but "He has been assigned the province" and "This did occur in Rome." Rumour, a synonym for the uncertain, has no place 11 where there is certainty. Would anybody believe Rumour, except the unthinking? The wise man does not believe uncertainty. It lies with everybody to reflect that, however widely Rumour has been put about, with whatever assurance it has been contrived, it must necessarily have originated at some moment with some single person who started it. After 12 that it creeps through ramifications of tongues and ears; and something wrong in the little seed, whence it sprang, so obscures all else in the rumour, that no one reflects whether that first mouth sowed the lie, as

often happens, from an envious nature, from wanton suspicion, or from that mere pleasure in lying which with some people is no new thing but inborn in them. It is well that time reveals all, as your own proverbs and wise saws witness, and does it by the law of nature, which has so ordained that nothing long lies hid, even when Rumour has not flung it abroad. Very properly, **13** then, Rumour alone all this long time is the authority for the crimes of the Christians. Rumour is the informer you bring forward against us. Yet what she once launched and in all this interval has hardened into general belief, to this hour she has not been able to prove. So I would appeal to the authority of Nature herself to give evidence against those who assume such charges to be credible.

VIII. Look, then; we offer a reward for these **1** crimes; they promise eternal life! For the moment believe it. Then I ask a question on this point—whether even you, sir, who have believed it, count eternal life worth winning at such a price, with all this on your conscience? Come! plunge the knife into the baby, **2** nobody's enemy, guilty of nothing, everybody's child; or, if that is the other man's job, do you just stand by (that is all), by this human creature dying before it has lived; watch for the young soul as it escapes; catch the infant blood; steep your bread with it; eat and enjoy it. Meanwhile, as you recline on your **3** couch, reckon the places where your mother, your sister, may be; make a careful note so that, when the darkness of the dogs' contriving shall fall, you can make no mistake. You will be guilty of a sin, unless you have committed incest. So initiated, so **4** sealed,^a you live for ever. I wish you to answer: Is eternity worth it? Or if it is not, then you must not

believe the tales. Even if you have believed, I deny that you wish it [at the price]; even if you should wish it, I deny that you could *do* the thing. Then how can others do it, if you cannot? Why can't you, if others can? Oh, we have another nature, I suppose! 5 Dog-headed men, perhaps, or Sciapods? ^a A different arrangement of teeth, other muscles for incestuous lust? You, sir, who believe this of any man, you can do it just as easily as believe it. You are a man yourself, and that is just what a Christian is. You, sir, who cannot do the thing, ought not to believe it of another. For a Christian too is a man, and exactly what you are.

“But, of course, the ignorant are trapped into it; 6 the trick is played on them. For they never knew that any such thing is asserted of Christians,—nothing that they should look into, nothing to investigate with all watchfulness.” Yet when men seek initiation, 7 the usual thing, I suppose, is first to approach the “father” of the ritual, to map out what is to be prepared. Then quoth he: “You must have a baby, still tender, that can know nothing of death, that can smile under your knife; *item* a loaf, to catch its juicy blood; add lampstands and lamps, a dog or two, and some sops to set the dogs tumbling the lamps over; above all, you must come with your mother and sister.” But if they won't come, or 8 if you have none? What, Christians with *no* relatives? I suppose, a man is not a regular Christian unless he is a brother or a son. “But, look! what if all this is made ready for people who know nothing about it?” At all events they know afterwards, and bear up under it, and forgive it. “They are afraid 9 of punishment, if they were to tell the story.” They

will deserve to be protected^a; they would prefer to die right out than to live with such deeds on their conscience. Put it that they are afraid—why do they go on with it? For it follows that you would not wish to be any longer what, if only you had known before, you never would have been.

IX. To refute these charges still further, I will show 1 that these very things are done by you, sometimes openly, sometimes in secret, and that perhaps is the reason for your having believed them about us also.

In Africa infants used to be sacrificed to Saturn,^b 2 and quite openly, down to the proconsulate of Tiberius,^c who took the priests themselves and on the very trees of their temple, under whose shadow their crimes had been committed, hung them alive like votive offerings on crosses; and the soldiers of my own country^d are witnesses to it, who served that proconsul in that very task. Yes, and to this day 3 that holy crime persists in secret. Christians are not the only people who defy you; no crime is ever wholly rooted out; nor does any of your gods change his ways. Saturn did not spare his own children; 4 so, where other people's were concerned, he naturally persisted in not sparing them; and their own parents offered them to him, were glad to respond, and fondled their children that they might not be sacrificed in tears. And between murder and sacrifice by parents—oh! the difference is great! Persons of 5 older years used to be sacrificed to Mercury among the Gauls. The plays about the Tauric Chersonese belong to the theatres, and there I leave them.^e But,

^e *Iphigenia in Tauris* may be in his mind, or plays copied from it.

look you! in that most religious of all cities, the city of the pious race of Aeneas, is a certain Jupiter, whom they drench with human blood at his own games. "Yes, but only the blood of a man condemned already to the beasts," you say? That, I take it, makes it something less than a man's blood? Or may it not be so much worse because the blood of a bad man? At all events it is at least the blood of murder. What a Christian Jove, to be sure, his father's only son so far as cruelty goes!^a But since 6 there is no difference as to baby-killing whether you do it as a sacred rite or just because you choose to do it (though we must grant a difference between murder and killing your own child^b), I will turn to the people.

How many, think you, of these persons standing round and panting for Christian blood,—how many of you, most just magistrates and most severe upon us, how many should I touch in their consciences for killing their own children, born to them? Since 7 there is a difference between one kind of death and another, surely your way is more cruel, to choke out the breath in water, or to expose to cold, starvation and the dogs.^c Grown-up people would sooner die by iron. For us murder is once for all forbidden; so even 8 the child in the womb, while yet the mother's blood is still being drawn on to form the human being, it is not lawful for us to destroy. To forbid birth is only quicker murder. It makes no difference whether one take away the life once born or destroy it as it comes to birth. He is a man, who is to be a man; the fruit is always present in the seed.

firms the charge. The papyrus letter of Hilarion to Alis (A.D. 1) is well known; "If it was a girl, put it out."

As to tasting blood, and such like tragic dishes, 9
 read—wherever it may be told (it is in Herodotus,^a
 I think)—how some tribes have used blood drawn
 from the arms of both parties and taste it to
 seal a treaty. Something of the kind was tasted in
 Catiline's plot.^b They say, too, that among some
 tribesmen of Scythian stock every dead man is eaten
 by his kindred.^c But I go too far afield. To-day 10
 and here, when men are dedicated to Bellona, the
 thigh is cut, the blood is caught in a little shield,^d
 and given them to consume—as a sign. Again,
 those who, when a show is given in the arena,
 with greedy thirst have caught the fresh blood of the
 guilty slain, as it pours fresh from their throats, and
 carry it off as a cure for their epilepsy^e—what of
 them? Again, those who dine on the flesh of wild 11
 animals from the arena, keen on the meat of boar
 or stag? That boar in his battle has wiped the blood
 off him whose blood he drew; that stag has wallowed
 in the blood of a gladiator. The bellies of the very
 bears are sought, full of raw and undigested human
 flesh. Man's flesh goes belching, fattened on man's
 flesh. You who eat these things, how far are you 12
 from those Christian banquets?

Let your error blush^f before the Christians, for we 13
 do not include even animals' blood in our natural
 diet. We abstain on that account from things
 strangled or that die of themselves, that we may
 not in any way be polluted by blood, even if it is

^a Cf. Herodotus, i. 216, the Massagetai eat the aged; iv. 26, the Issedones eat the dead.

^b Or "in the hand."

^c Cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 1 (2).

^f In less rhetorical language, "blush for your unnatural practices in eating."

buried in the meat.^a Finally, when you are testing 14
 Christians, you offer them sausages full of blood ;
 you are thoroughly well aware, of course, that
 among them it is forbidden ; but you want to make
 them transgress. Now, I ask you, what sort of a thing
 is it, that when you are confident they will turn with
 horror from animals' blood, you should suppose them
 greedy for human blood—unless perhaps you your-
 selves have found it sweeter ? Human blood then 15
 ought to be used as an extra test with the Christians,
 like the brazier and incense-box. They would be con-
 victed as much by their eagerness for human blood
 as by their refusal of sacrifice, and acquitted if they
 did not taste it, just as they would be if they had
 sacrificed. And when your prisoners were being
 tried and condemned, there would, I am very sure,
 be no shortage of human blood.

Then again who are more incestuous than the 16
 disciples of Jupiter ? The Persians according to
 Ctesias consort with their mothers. And the Mace-
 donians are suspected of it too, because when first
 they heard the tragedy of *Oedipus*, they laughed
 at his grief for the incest ; “ he lay with Jocasta,”
 they said. Yet now reflect how far error may go in 17
 promoting incest, as your promiscuous wantonness
 offers occasion. To begin, you expose your children
 to be taken up by the pity of any stray outsider who
 passes—or (shall we say ?) you release them to be
 adopted by better parents. When the family is
 discarded, sometimes memory must be lost ; and when
 once mistake strikes in, then a strain of incest will
 continue as stock and sin creep on together. Then, 18
 in the next instance, whatever the spot, at home,
 abroad, across the sea, lust goes with you, whose sallies

may in every place beget you children without your knowing it; a very little of the seed will do it; so that a stock scattered through the range of human travel may fall in with its own source, and, all unaware, fail to recognize an incestuous union.

From such an event we are guarded by a chastity, 19 supremely careful and faithful; we are safe from random intercourse and from all excess after marriage, and in that degree from the risk of incest. Some indeed, in a much greater security, guard themselves against the violence of this sin by a virgin continence, old in years but still children.^a If you 20 would realize that these sins are found among yourselves, you would see that they are not to be found among the Christians. The same eyes would assure you of both facts. But two sorts of blindness easily meet, so that those, who do not see what is really there, seem to see what is not. So in all the points at issue, as I will show you. But now of our more conspicuous crimes!

X. "You do not," say you "worship the gods; 1 you do not offer sacrifice for the Emperors." It follows by parity of reasoning that we do not sacrifice for others because we do not for ourselves—it follows from our not worshipping the gods. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason at once. That is the chief of the case against us—the whole of it, in fact; and it in any case deserves investigation, unless the judgement is to be given by prejudice or injustice, the one despairing of the truth, the other refusing it.^b Your gods, then, we cease to worship, 2 from the moment when we recognize that they are not gods. So that is what you ought to require us to prove—that those gods are not gods and are there-

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fore not to be worshipped ; because it is only if they had been gods that they should be worshipped. Then indeed Christians would deserve punishment if it were established that the gods whom they did not worship because they thought they were not gods, really were gods.

“ But they are gods for us,” you say. Here we 3 lodge an appeal, and carry the case from you to your conscience. Let your conscience judge us, let it condemn us, if it can deny that all these gods of yours were once men.^a But if your conscience shall contest 4 the point against us, it shall be refuted from the ancient books from which it learnt the gods ; and testimony is also given to this day by the cities in which the gods were born, and by the regions in which they left traces of anything they did,—yes, and in which they were demonstrably buried. And 5 now—am I to run over them in detail, in all their number and greatness, new gods and old, barbarian, Greek, Roman, foreign, captive, adoptive, private, public, male, female, rustic, urban, naval, military ? It would be idle to list even their titles to make a compendium of them ; it would not give you new information but would merely remind you. For you certainly act as if you had forgotten. Before 6 Saturn you had no god among you ; he is the original of all your pantheon, or of the more powerful of them, the better-known. So whatever is established about the source, will suit the posterity. As to 7 Saturn, then, so far as books inform us, neither Diodorus the Greek nor Thallus, neither Cassius Severus nor Cornelius Nepos, nor any other author dealing with antiquities of that kind,^b has alleged that Saturn was anything but a man. As to proofs

from actual monuments, I find none more reliable than in Italy itself, where, after his many expeditions and his visit to Attica, Saturn settled down, made welcome by Janus,—or Janes, as the Salii prefer it. The mountain which he inhabited is called 8 Saturnius; the city whose bounds he staked out is Saturnia to this day; the whole of Italy in fact, after being called Oenotria, bore the name Saturnia. From him first came writing^a; and coin stamped with an image; and hence he rules the treasury. Yet, if Saturn was a man, I suppose he was born of 9 man; and, since he was born of man, he was not the child of the sky and the earth. But, where a man's parents were unknown, it was easy for him to be called the child of sky and earth; we must all pass for being their children. Who would not call sky and earth mother and father, by way of veneration and honour? Or it may be merely human usage, just as we say that unknown persons or people turning up unexpectedly have come from the sky. Then as 10 Saturn was everywhere unexpected, it was his lot to be called a child of the sky. For people, whose family is unknown, are called, in the vulgar phrase, "sons of earth." I waive the fact that men were in those days so uncivilized that they were moved by the sight of any strange person as if divine,—when to-day civilized people will deify persons whom they have a day or two before by public mourning admitted to be dead. But enough of Saturn, in these few 11 words. We will show that Jove too was a man and born of man, and thereafter that the whole family swarm were mortal,—mortal as the seed they came of.

XI. But since, while you dare not deny that the gods 1 once were men, you have yet made it your practice to

affirm that after death they became gods, let us discuss the causes that brought this about. First of all, you must allow there is a God more sublime, true owner in his own right (so to say) of deity,^a who made the gods out of men. For neither could they have assumed for themselves a deity they did not possess, nor could another give it them when they were without it, unless he really had it himself. But if there were nobody who could make gods, it is idle to assume gods were made when you do away with the maker. At all events, if they could have made themselves, they would never have been men, with this power in themselves of having a better position.

So, if there is one who makes gods, I turn back to examine the reasons for making gods out of men; and I find no reasons—unless their services and their assistance in his divine functions were desired by the great God. First, then, it is beneath his dignity to need the help of another (and a dead man's help, at that!) when, with more dignity, he might have made a god to start with, if he were going to need the aid of a dead man. But I do not see the place where that aid is needed. For this whole fabric of the universe, whether unborn and unmade (as Pythagoras says) or born or made (as Plato prefers^b), we find to be once for all disposed, equipped, ordered as it stands, and supplied with the complete guidance of reason. That could not be imperfect, which has perfected all things. Nothing was left waiting for Saturn and Saturn's tribe. Men will be fools, unless they are sure that from the beginning the rain fell from
sunt, ut Platoni videtur, vel si semper fuerunt, ut Aristoteli placet, moderator tanti operis et muneris?

heaven, the stars shone, the lights were bright, the thunder roared, yes, and Jove himself was afraid of the thunderbolts which you put in his hand ; unless they are sure that before Liber and Ceres and Minerva and before the first man (whoever he was), crops came richly from the earth, for nothing designed to preserve and sustain man could be introduced *after* man. In fact, your gods are said to have discovered those necessities of life, not to have devised them. But what is discovered has already existed ; what has already existed will be credited not to him who discovered it but to him who devised it ; for it existed before it was found. But if Liber is a god because he showed men the vine, it is a sad pity for Lucullus, who first introduced the cherry from Pontus to Italy, that he was not consecrated a god for it, as author of a new fruit, because he was the discoverer of it.^a Thus, if from the very beginning the universe stood there equipped and furnished with definite laws for the exercise of all its functions, from this point of view there really is no cause for electing men into the ranks of the gods ; because the posts and powers you have allotted to them existed from the beginning, and as surely would have existed even if you had never created these gods.

But you turn over to another reason ; you rejoin that the bestowal of deity was a method of rewarding their merits. And in this you allow, I suppose, that the God who makes gods excels in justice, seeing that neither recklessly nor unworthily, nor in prodigal style, has he dispensed this great reward. I would like, then, to review the merits alleged, to determine whether they are of a nature to raise those men to heaven and not rather to plunge them into the

bottom of Tartarus, which you, when you so please, affirm to be the prison of infernal punishment. That 12 is the place to which commonly are relegated the impious, those who commit incest on parents or sisters, who seduce wives, rape virgins, defile boys, who are cruel, who kill, who steal, who deceive, anyone, in short, who might be like some god or other of yours, not one of whom you will be able to prove free from guilt or vice—unless you deny that he was a man. And yet, just as you cannot deny that they 13 were men, those stains upon them forbid us to believe they afterwards became gods. If you sit as magistrates to punish such persons, if you (all decent people, that is) repudiate intercourse, converse, association with the bad and foul, but if the great God took their like to be partners of his majesty—why do you condemn people, whose fellows you adore? Your justice is an affront to heaven. You should make 14 your worst criminals into gods, if you would please your gods! The consecration of their equals is an honour to them! But, to drop discussion of this 15 indignity—let us suppose them to have been honest, upright, good. Well, even so, how many better men have you left among the dead? A Socrates for wisdom, an Aristides for justice, a Themistocles for military skill, an Alexander for grandeur, a Polycrates for luck, a Croesus for wealth, a Demosthenes for eloquence? Who among those gods of yours is more 16 reverend, more wise, than Cato, more just and more of a military genius than Scipio, grander than Pompey, luckier than Sulla, richer than Crassus, more eloquent than Cicero? How much more worthily might he have waited to take them as gods, when he must surely have foreseen that they would be better? He

must have been in a great hurry, I think, and closed heaven once and for all; and now, no doubt, when better men are grumbling about it in the world of the dead, he is put to the blush.

XII. I stop on this issue; for I know that on the 1
 basis of truth I shall have shown what they are not,
 when I have made clear what they are. So, as to your
 gods, I see merely the names of certain dead men of
 the past; I hear their stories; from their stories I
 understand their rituals. As to their actual images, 2
 I find nothing beyond material akin to what is in
 ordinary pots and tools. Or else the matter of those
 same pots and tools experiences in consecration a
 change of destiny, as the free hand of art transforms
 it—and (let me say) does it with the maximum of
 insult, yes! and sacrilege, while the work is pro-
 ceeding. So it really might be a consolation to us
 in our pains, when we are tortured because of these
 gods, that they too suffer the same, to become gods. 3
 You hang Christians on crosses and stakes; what idol
 is there but is first moulded in clay, hung on cross
 and stake? It is on a gibbet that the body of your
 god is first dedicated. With hooks you tear the flanks 4
 of Christians; but on your gods, over every limb of
 them, fall axes and planes and rasps. We lay down
 our necks [to lose our heads]; before the lead, the glue,
 the nails, your gods have not a head at all. We
 are driven to the beasts,—those beasts which you
 attach to Liber, to Ceres, to the Celestial Mother.
 We are burnt in the flames; so are they in the 5
 first state of the ore. We are condemned to the
 mines; and that is where your gods come from. We
 are banished to islands; very frequently a god of
 yours will be born or will die on an island.^a

If this is the way to deity, then those whom you punish are being deified ; punishment and apotheosis will be the same thing. But then, obviously, your 6 gods do not feel these injuries and insults involved in their fabrication—nor your adoration either ! Oh, impious words. O profane abuse ! Grind your teeth, vent your spittle ! Yes, you are the same people, who blamed a Seneca, when at greater length and with words more bitter he declaimed on your superstitions.^a So, if we do not adore statues and 7 images, cold as their own dead men, and just like them,—statues which the kites, the mice, the spiders^b quite comprehend—should not praise rather than punishment have been the reward for repudiating recognized error ? For can we really be supposed to injure those who we are certain do not exist at all ? What is non-existent suffers no injury from anybody, because it does not exist.

XIII. “ But for us they are gods,” you say. Then 1 I retort your charge, and ask how is it that you are found to be impious, sacrilegious, irreligious towards your gods—in that those whom you presume to be gods you neglect ; whom you fear, you destroy ; whom you actually champion, you mock ? Look to it, if I lie. First, then, when some of you worship one lot 2 of gods and another group others, why, surely those whom you do not worship you offend. There cannot be preference of the one without slight to the other ; there is no choice without rejection. So you really 3 despise those whom you reject—whom you are not afraid to offend by rejecting them. For, as we noted

^b The spiders weave their webs over the idols as over other objects, and the birds foul them ; they at least recognize what they are.

before, the status of each god depended on the estimate of him made by the Senate. He was not a god, whom man on consultation ^a had not wished, and by not wishing had condemned. Gods of the house, ⁴ whom you call *lares*, you deal with according to your household rights—pledging them, selling them, transforming them at times—making a cooking-pot of Saturn, a wash basin of Minerva, as each might be worn down and knocked about in the course of long worship—or as any particular owner might find domestic necessity more sacred. Public gods you ⁵ dishonour equally under public law, as you make them yield you revenue at auction.^b Whether it is to the Capitol you go or the vegetable market, it is all one; the same tones of the auctioneer, the same spear, the same registration by the quaestor; and deity is knocked down to the highest bidder, and leased out. But lands subject to tribute go cheaper; ⁶ persons assessed under the poll-tax are less noble; for these are the marks of servitude. But gods are more sacred the more tribute they pay; indeed, the more sacred they are, the bigger the tribute. Their majesty is made money-making. Religion goes round the cookshops begging. You exact a price for the ground one stands on in a temple, for the approach to the holy rite; one may not know the gods for nothing; they are for sale.^c

What at all do you do to honour them, that you ⁷ do not bestow on your dead also? Temples alike; altars alike. The same garb, the same emblems on

Fees for initiation are mentioned by Apuleius, *Met.* xi. 23. 28; cf. Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, i. 10. The apologists point out that no charge is made for the Christian sacraments. The begging priests of Cybele are familiar.

the statues. The age, the art, the business of the dead man—and the god the same. What is the difference between the feast of Jove and the funeral feast? Between the sacrificial bowl and the cup of libation to the dead? Between the priestly inspector of entrails and the washer of corpses? For the former attends on the dead.

Still, it is quite proper for you to bestow the honour 8 of deity on dead emperors, when you make it theirs while alive. The gods will take it kindly—they will congratulate themselves—that their masters are put on a level with them. But when you adore Larentina,^a 9 the public harlot (I could wish it had at least been Lais or Phryne!) among the Junos, the Cereses and Dianas; when you establish Simon Magus with a statue and the inscription "Holy God"^b; when from among the pages of the imperial court you make some lad a god of the Sacred Synod^c;—well, though the old gods were no nobler themselves, still they will count it insolence from you, that the privilege which antiquity gave to them alone, is open to others.

XIV. I am unwilling to review your rituals. I 1 say nothing of your ways as to sacrifice, in offering the worn out, the decaying, the scabrous; nor how you lop from the choice and sound all that is useless,—heads and hoofs,—which at home you would have destined for the slaves and the dogs; nor of the tithe of Hercules,^d of which you do not put one third

^a For the story of Antinous see B. W. Henderson, *Emperor Hadrian*, pp. 130-134; Pausanias, viii. 9. 7-8.

^d It was a common practice to vow a tenth to Hercules, if one should have real good luck; *cf.* Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, iii. 36. 88; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, iii. 12. 2; Plautus, *Truculentus*, ii. vii. 11, and others of his plays.

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on his altar. I would rather praise your wisdom in salving something out of the loss!

But I turn to your literature, by which you are 2 trained in wisdom and the liberal arts; and what absurdities I find! I read how the gods on account of Trojans and Achaeans fell to it and fought it out themselves like so many pairs of gladiators; how Venus was wounded by a man's arrow, because she wished to snatch away her son Aeneas, who was all but killed by that same Diomedes; how Mars 3 was almost done to death by thirteen months in fetters; how Jove, to escape similar outrage from the rest of the celestials, was liberated by a certain monster's aid; how now he wept Sarpedon's fall, and now he shamefully craved his sister's embraces, recounting to her all the former doxies he had never loved so much! ^a And thereafter which of the poets 4 is not to be found following the pattern of his great original and dishonouring the gods? This poet binds over Apollo to King Admetus to feed his flocks ^b; the other leases Neptune's services as builder to Laomedon. ^c And then there is one of the lyric poets (I mean Pindar) who sings how Aesculapius on the score of his avarice, because he made improper use of his healing skill, was punished by a thunderbolt. ^d Jupiter was evil, if that thunderbolt was his—without proper affection for his grandson, envious of the artist. If these tales were true, they ought not to be pub- 5 lished, if false they should not be invented, among people so very religious. Neither tragic nor comic 6 poets spare them, but must needs find their plots in the sorrows or blunders that befall in some god's house or other.

I say nothing of the philosophers; Socrates 7

serves my need, who to mock the gods would swear by the oak, the goat and the dog. But Socrates was condemned, because he was destroying the gods. Quite clearly of old—that means always—truth is hated. Yet, when, in regret for their decision, the Athenians later on punished his accusers and put a golden image of him in the temple, the cancelling of his condemnation was a testimony to Socrates.^a Yes, and Diogenes too has his jest at Hercules^b; and the Roman cynic, Varro, introduces three hundred Joves (or ought one to say Jupiters?) without heads.^c

XV. And all the other wanton men of genius to promote your pleasures do dishonour to the gods. Look at the pretty trifles of a Lentulus or a Hostilius^d—is it your actors or your gods that make you laugh with their jokes and tricks? Think of “Anubis the Adulterer,” “The Gentleman Moon,” “Diana Lashed,”^e and the reading of “The Will of the late Jove, deceased,” and the mockery of “Three hungry Herculeses.” But the literature of the stage too attributes every foulness to the gods. The Sun laments his son hurled from the sky^f—to your delight. Cybele sighs for her proud shepherd—and you don’t blush. You suffer a song to be sung of the ill-deeds of Jove^g; you let Juno, Venus, Minerva submit to a shepherd’s award. What again does it mean that the likeness of your god covers the shameful and infamous head of an actor^h? that a vile body, cas-

^a These names are otherwise unknown; but *cf.* Ovid, *Tristia*, ii. 497 “quodsi scripsissem mimos obscaena iocantes.”

^e *Cf. Iliad*, xxi. 489.

^f Phaëthon.

^g *Elogium* in law is a judicial abstract of offences charged or proved against a prisoner.

^h The actor wears a mask which portrays a god.

APOLOGETICUS, xv. 3-7

trated for the art of the theatre, represents some Minerva or Hercules? Is not their majesty violated, their deity defiled, by your plaudits?

But you really are still more religious in the amphitheatre, where over human blood, over the dirt of pollution of capital punishment, your gods dance, supplying plots and themes for the guilty—unless it is that often the guilty play the parts of the gods. We have seen^a at one time or other Atys, that god from Pessinus, being castrated; and a man, who was being burned alive, had been rigged out as Hercules. We have laughed, amid the noon's blend of cruelty and absurdity,^b at Mercury using his burning iron to see who was dead. We have seen Jove's brother,^c too, hauling out the corpses of gladiators, hammer in hand. And all the details of it, who could inquire into them? If they overturn the honour of deity, if they blot out every trace of majesty, it simply means the sheer contempt felt by those who do these things, and by those for whom they do them.

But suppose that is all play. Then if I add—and the conscience of every man of you will recognize it as readily—if I add that in the temples adulteries are arranged, that between the altars the pander's trade is plied, that, quite commonly, in the very vestries of temple-keeper and priest, under those same holy fillets, crowns and purple garments, while the incense burns, lust is gratified—well, I do not know and the correction represents what the apologists constantly said in plain words. K. Lake in the Loeb *Apostolic Fathers* accepts neither text nor correction.)

^b We are told that at noon cheap pairs of gladiators without shield or helmet were set to kill each other.

^c *i.e.*, Pluto.

whether your gods may not have more complaints to make of you than of the Christians. Certainly the temple-robbers who are caught are always of your party. Christians have no knowledge of the temples even in the daytime ^a; perhaps they too would rob them, if they adored them.

Well, what *do* they worship, who don't worship ⁸ such things? Here you have it; it lies within easy reach of your understanding, that, since they are not worshippers of falsehood, they are worshippers of Truth; that they no longer continue in an error which they have recognized and so have abandoned. Get a hold of this point first, and then learn the whole system of our religion—but there are some false opinions about it that must first be cleared out of the way.

XVI. For, in fact, with other people, you have ¹ dreamed that our God is an ass's head. This sort of notion Cornelius Tacitus introduced. For in the fifth ² book of his *Histories* ^b he begins his account of the Jewish War with the origin of the race; and about that origin as about the name and religion of the race he discoursed as he pleased. He tells how the Jews, liberated from Egypt, or, as he thought, exiled, were in the wilderness of Arabia utterly barren of water; and how, dying of thirst, they saw wild asses, which chanced to be returning from their pasture (it was thought) to slake their thirst; how they used them as guides to a fountain, and out of gratitude consecrated the likeness of a beast of the kind. Thence came, I think, the assumption that ³ we too, standing so near Jewish religion, are devoted to worship of the same image. Yet this same Cornelius Tacitus—no, not Tacit, he, but a first

class chatterbox when it comes to lies!—in the same History tells how Cnaeus Pompey, on taking Jerusalem, visited the temple to look into the mysteries of Jewish religion, and found no image there. And 4 surely if the object of worship had been represented by any image, nowhere would it have been more likely to be seen than in its own shrine; all the more, because, however trivial the worship, there at least it feared no eyes from outside. For only the priests were allowed to enter; even to look in was made impossible for all others by a veil hung between. You, however, will 5 not deny that every kind of baggage cattle and whole donkeys^a with their goddess Epona^b are objects of your worship. Perhaps this is the real source of our bad name, that, among worshippers of every kind of beast and quadruped, we confine ourselves to the ass!

Yes, and the man who thinks we worship the cross, 6 will prove a fellow-worshipper of ours. For when a bit of wood is worshipped—what matters the shape, if the nature of the material is the same? what the form if it is itself the body of a god? Yet what distinction can you make between the shaft of a cross and Attic Pallas or Pharian Ceres, each of whom stands there unshaped, a rude pole, a log untrimmed?^c Every balk of timber, which is set up erect, is a part of 7 a cross; we—perhaps—worship a god complete and whole. We have said that in the first instance your gods are moulded by the sculptors on a cross.^d But you also adore Victories, and in all trophies the cross is the inner structure of the trophy. Roman religion, 8

carent caesisque exstant informia truncis” (the grove of the Druids).

^a See ch. 12. 8. He refers once more to the wooden structure on which the clay is modelled for the image.

every bit of it a religion of camps,^a venerates the standards, swears by the standards, sets the standards before all the gods.^b All those rows of images on the standards are but ornaments hung on crosses. Those hangings of your standards and banners are but robes upon crosses.^c I laud your thoughtfulness. You did not wish to consecrate crosses naked and unadorned.

Others again (it is really a more refined, a more 9 probable idea) believe the sun to be our god. We shall be reckoned perhaps as Persians, though we do not adore the sun painted on a canvas, seeing we have the sun with us everywhere in his own orb.^d This 10 suspicion must be due to its becoming known that we turn to the East when we pray. But again a great many of you, in some make-believe of adoring now and then the heavenly bodies among other things, move your lips at sunrise. Equally, if we devote the 11 day of the sun (Sunday) to joy (from a very different cause than sun-worship) we stand next in line to those who devote Saturn's day to resting and eating, wide as they are from Jewish usage of which they know nothing.^e

But quite recently in this city a new representation 12 of our god has been displayed, since a certain person,^f a criminal hired to dodge wild beasts in the arena, exhibited a picture with this inscription: "The God of the Christians, ass-begotten." It had ass's ears; one foot was a hoof; it carried a book and wore a toga.

^a Mayor takes *clypseus* as the sun's disk; Kellner as its orbit.

^b Cf. Horace, *Sat.* i. 9. 69 "tricesima sabbata"; Ovid, *A.A.* i. 76; Juvenal, xiv. 96.

^f This person is described by Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, i. 14, as "suae religionis desertor, solo detrimento cutis Iudaeus."

We laughed at both the name and the shape. But 13 they at least ought at once to have adored a biform divinity, who have accepted gods with a dog's head or a lion's, gods with a goat's horns or a ram's, gods goat from the loins down, gods with serpents for legs, gods with wings on their feet or their backs.

All this, at unnecessary length—lest it should seem that, from conscious guilt, we had passed over any fragment of rumour unrebuted. All such tales, then, we have cleared off, and turn now to expound our religion.

XVII. What we worship is the One God; who 1 fashioned this whole fabric with all its equipment of elements, bodies, spirits; who by the word wherewith He commanded, by the reason wherewith He ordered it, by the might wherewith He could do it, fashioned it out of nothing, to the glory of His majesty. Hence the Greeks also have given to the universe the name *cosmos*, "order." He is invisible, though He is seen; 2 incomprehensible, though by grace revealed; beyond our conceiving, though conceived by human senses. So true is He and so great. But what in the ordinary sense can be seen, comprehended, conceived, is less than the eyes that grasp it, the hands that soil it, the senses that discover it. The infinite is known only to itself. Because this is so, it allows us to con- 3 ceive of God—though He is beyond our conceiving.³ The power of His greatness makes Him known to men, and unknown. And here is the sum total of their sin who will not recognize Him whom they cannot fail to know. Would you have us prove him to you 4 from His own works, in their multitude and character, those works that contain us, that sustain us, that delight us; yes! and affright us? Would you have

us prove Him to you from the witness of the human soul itself? Yes! the soul, be it cabined and 5 cribbed by the body, be it confined by evil nurture, be it robbed of its strength by lusts and desires, be it enslaved to false gods,—none the less, when it recovers its senses, as after surfeit, as after sleep, as after some illness, when it recaptures^a its proper health, the soul names God, and for this reason and no other, because, if language be used aright, He is the one true God. “Great God!” “Good God!” “Which may God give!” is the utterance of all men. That He is also Judge, is 6 shown by such utterance as: “God sees;” “I leave it to God;” “God will repay me.” O the witness of the soul, in its very nature Christian! And then, as it says these words, it turns its gaze not to the Capitol, but to heaven. For it knows the abode of the living God; from Him and from heaven it came.

XVIII. But that more fully and more firmly we 1 might approach God Himself and His thoughts and His will, He has given us the help of books, that who will, may inquire regarding God, on inquiring may find Him, on finding Him may believe, on believing may serve Him. Men worthy in their 2 stainless righteousness to know God and to show God, from the very beginning He sent into the world, steeped in the Holy Spirit, to proclaim that He alone is God, Who made the universe, Who fashioned man of mud—(for He is your true Prometheus!^b)—Who ordained the course of the world, appointing the seasons, the one to follow the other; to tell us, moreover, what 3 proofs in flood and in fire He has displayed of His avenging Majesty; what laws of life He has appointed whereby we may please him; what requital He has

determined for ignorance of those laws, for breaking or keeping them ; seeing that, when this age reaches its full end, He will sit as Judge, and His worshippers He will repay with life eternal, and the profane He will condemn to fire as perpetual and unceasing ; for the dead, every man of them from the beginning, shall be raised, refashioned and reviewed, that their deserts of either kind, good or evil, may be adjudged.

Yes ! we too in our day laughed at this. We are 4 from among yourselves. Christians are made, not born !

These messengers of God, whom we mentioned, 5 are called prophets from the function of prediction. Their voices, their virtues ^a—all directed to promote faith in Godhead—are still in the treasure-house of letters, which are no secret. The most learned of the Ptolemies, whom they surname Philadelphus,^b most acute in all literature, the rival (I would say) of Pisistratus in love of libraries, in addition to the other documents which age or art recommended to fame (it was Demetrius of Phalerum that gave him the hint, of all scholars of that day most expert, chief librarian of the King)—Ptolemy, then, asked the Jews also for their books, their own literature in their own tongue, which they alone possessed. Of the 6 Jews had the prophets come ; to the Jews had the prophets ever preached as to the race and household of God, in accordance with the grace shown to their fathers. Hebrews of old they were, who now are Jews ; so the books are called Hebrew and the language. But that understanding of their books 7 might not be wanting, the concession was made to Ptolemy by the Jews, and seventy-two interpreters were given to him—men, whom Menedemus,^c him-

self a philosopher, champion of belief in Providence, esteemed for their sharing this dogma with him. Aristaeus^a has told you the story, too. So he left the 8 records open to all in Greek. To this day in the temple of Serapis, Ptolemy's library is displayed together with the Hebrew originals. Why, yes! and the Jews openly read the books.^b They have that freedom in return for a tribute.^c Every Sabbath day there is common access to those books. He who will hear, will find God; he who will take the pains to understand, will find himself compelled to believe.

XIX. Supreme antiquity, then, claims for these 1 books the highest authority. And among *you* it is almost a superstition to make credit depend on time elapsed.

^d[Extreme antiquity gives books authority. For Moses was the first prophet. He began in the past with foundation of the world, the production of mankind, and later on the mighty cataclysm that avenged the iniquity of that age; by prophecy down to his own day and thereafter, in his own story he gave pictures of things yet to be. In his book the sequence of events set in order from the beginning has permitted the computation of the world's age. Moses then is discovered to have lived about three hundred years before your most ancient man Danaus had crossed to Argos; that means, he is about a thousand years earlier than the Trojan war, and

Codex Fuldensis. It is accepted as genuine by Harnack and Schanz; rejected by Rauschen. It looks like an alternative draft; and the *Ad Nationes* is a standing witness that Tertullian re-handled his matter. The reader will feel that the second draft is far the more vigorous.

consequently earlier than Saturn himself. For according to the history of Thallus,^a in which is narrated the war which Belus, king of the Assyrians and Saturn, king of the Titans, waged with Jove, it is shown that this war was 322 years before the fall of Troy. It was by this Moses too that their peculiar Law was sent to the Jews by God. Much follows ; and other prophets older than your literature. For the very last who sang was either a little antecedent to your sages and your legislators, or at any rate of the same period. For Zacharias lived in the reign of Cyrus and Darius,^b at the very time when Thales, chief of the philosophers who wrote of Nature, could give no certain answer to Croesus's inquiry as to deity—perplexed, I suppose, by the words of the prophets. Solon told the same king that the end of a long life must be seen^c—much as the prophets did. So it can be seen that your laws and your studies alike were fertilized from the [Hebrew] law and teaching of God ; the earlier must be the seed. Hence you have some tenets in common with us, or very near us. From *sophia* men call the love of wisdom philosophy ; from prophecy comes, by emulation of it, poetic "vaticination."^d Anything glorious that men found, they must, to make it their own, spoil it. Even crops degenerate from their seed. In many ways I must maintain the antiquity of the divine library, did it not derive more authority to win credence from its own force of truth than from any annals of a former day. What can more powerfully sustain the testimony of

^a Herodotus i. 32.

^d *Vates* is bard and prophet, a familiar word in Horace, *vatis amici, vatis Horati* (*Odes* ii. 6. 24; iv. 6. 44), and in Virgil. And see the end of this bracketed passage.

that library than its daily fulfilment all the world over, when the disposal of kingdoms, the fall of cities, the fate of nations, the posture of the times,^a answer so exactly in every particular to what was foretold thousands of years ago? It is from that fact that our hope (which you mock) draws animation, our faith (which you call presumption) corroboration. Recognition of what has come to pass may properly dispose to belief in what is yet to be. The same voices have foretold both alike; the same books have recorded both. Time, which seems to us to be two-fold (past and present), in those books is one. So all that remains over unproved, is for us proved, because it was foretold along with what is already proved but then was yet to be. You, too, I think, have a Sibyl—since this name belonging to a true prophetess of the true God has been very widely used to cover those who seemed to prophesy. Your Sibyls have turned the name from true to false, just as your gods have done.^{b]}

So all the subject matter, all the material, all the 2 origins, chronologies, sources, of every ancient pen you know—yes, and most of your races, your cities, famous in history, hoary of memory^c—nay, the very shapes of your letters, those witnesses and guardians of the past—and (for I seem to be understating things), I say, add your very gods, temples, oracles, rituals and all—the book of a single prophet notwithstanding beats them all, with centuries to spare,—that book in which is seen summed up the treasure of the whole Jewish religion, and in con-

irony in *habetis et vos*, as if the heathen Sibyl were a copy. The fact, however, was the other way.

^a Cf. *μάθημα χρόνω πολιόν*, Plato, *Timaeus*, 22 B.

sequence of ours as well. If you chance, however, to 3
 have heard of one Moses, he is coeval with Argive
 Inachus, about four hundred years (to be exact, less
 seven) before Danaus who is *your* most ancient of
 men, a rough thousand years ahead of Priam's cala-
 mity. I might also say fifteen hundred years before
 Homer, with authority for saying so. Then the rest 4
 of the prophets—they, of course, come after Moses,
 but the very last of them are found not to be later
 than the early ones among your sages and lawgivers
 and historians. All this, the proofs of it in due 5
 order, it would not be difficult for us to set out in
 detail—not difficult so much as endless, not an
 arduous task, but for the moment too long. It
 would mean sitting down to a pile of books, with one's
 fingers busy in keeping the tally. We should have
 to unlock the archives of the most ancient races too
 —Egyptians, Chaldaeans, Phoenicians. We should 6
 have to summon their fellow-citizens through whom
 this knowledge is furnished to us—to wit, one Manetho
 an Egyptian, and Berosus a Chaldaean, and in addition
 Hieromus, a Phoenician and King of Tyre ; add their
 followers Ptolemy of Mendes, Menander of Ephesus,
 Demetrius of Phalerum, King Juba, Apion,^a Thallus,
 and any other who confirms or refutes them.^b The
 Jew Josephus, native champion of Jewish Antiquities,
 must be consulted, and the Greek books of Origins, 7
 to reckon out when each set of events befel, to dis-
 close the concatenations of eras, to elucidate the
 figures in our annals. It would mean an excursion
 into the histories and literatures of the world. Still
 we have really already introduced a good part of the

Other editors correct *si quis* to *qui*, which is obvious enough,
 if it were not Tertullian writing.

proof, when we have indicated how the proof can be established. Better postpone it—lest in our haste we finish too little, or wander too long in finishing it.⁶

XX. More than an equivalent we offer you in return for postponement of proof—the majesty of the scriptures—if we do not prove them divine from their antiquity, if it is still a question whether they are ancient. There will be no delay about *this*, or reference to evidence from elsewhere; here, in our presence, are the things that will teach us—I mean, the world, all time, all history. Everything that happens was foretold; everything now seen was of old heard. That the lands swallow up cities; that the seas steal islands; that wars without and wars within lacerate us; that kingdoms clash with kingdoms; that famine and plague, local disasters and wholesale death lay us waste; that the lowly are set on high, the high brought low; that justice grows rare, iniquity lavish and to spare, good manners lack all care; that the seasons are out of gear and the functions of the elements astray; that the order of nature is perverted by monsters and portents—it was all foreseen, it was all written. While we suffer, it is all read in the book; the recognition is the proof of it. I opine that a fair proof of the divinity would be the truth of the divination! Hence, then, we have a sure belief in what is yet to be—as proved already, in that it was predicted along with what every day is being proved. The same voices name it, the same books proclaim it; the same spirit impels them; time is *one* for divination foretelling what shall be.

Egyptian and Babylonian antiquities of religion. Modern scholars, judging them from their fragments, think poorly of their accuracy.

Among men, perchance a distinction may be made 5 while fulfilment proceeds, while from being future it is reckoned present, and then, no longer present, is counted past. Where is our mistake, I beg of you, if we believe also in the future, who have already learnt through two stages ^a to believe in it ?

XXI. But now that we have stated that this school ^b 1 rests on the very ancient books of the Jews—this school which most people know to be rather modern, as dating from the reign of Tiberius,—a fact we ourselves admit—perhaps some question may be raised as to the standing of the school, on the ground that, under cover of a very famous religion (and one certainly permitted by law), the school insinuates quietly certain claims of its own ; because (waiving 2 all question as to age) as regards forbidden food, sacred days, the bodily “ seal,” ^c or common designation, we have nothing to do with the Jews, as should surely be the case, if we were servants of the same God. But by now even the common people know 3 the name of Christ, taking him to be some man (as the Jews also thought), so that it is easier for anybody to think of us as worshippers of a man. But we neither blush for Christ (for it is our delight to be reckoned under His name and under it to be condemned) nor do we differ in our idea of God [from the Jews]. We must then say a few words about Christ as God.

Of old the Jews had favour with God ; such was 4 the outstanding righteousness and faith of the original founders of their race ; and thence followed for them a nation’s greatness, a kingdom’s splendour, such prosperity (in short) that by God’s own words (the source of their training) they were warned to

deserve God's care and not to offend Him. But 5
 what sin they committed ; how proud confidence in
 their origin led to their decline ; and how they
 turned from what they had been taught into ungodly
 ways—even if they did not confess it themselves, the
 outcome of it all for them to-day would prove it.
 Scattered, wanderers, exiles from their own soil and
 sky, they stray the world over, without man or God
 for their king ; they are not permitted even as
 foreigners to greet their native land, with so much
 as a footfall. Of this those holy voices warned them 6
 beforehand, and insisted at the same time (every one
 of them always, and in unison) that the day should
 come when in the last courses of time God would
 from every race, people and place gather Himself
 worshippers far more faithful, to whom He would
 transfer his favour, and that in fuller measure,
 because they would be able to bear an ampler
 discipline.

So to remake, to illuminate that discipline it was 7
 proclaimed by God that Christ the son of God should
 come ; and he came. To be the dispenser and
 teacher of this favour (grace) and discipline, to be the
 illuminator and guide of mankind, a Son of God was
 proclaimed beforehand—not so born as to blush for
 his sonship or his begetting. No incest with a sister 8
 was here, no pollution of a daughter or another's wife ;
 he had not to endure a divine father, disguised with
 scales, or horns, or feathers, a lover turned into gold
 for a Danaë ; no ! no ! it is your divinities that
 suffer such things from Jove ! But the Son of God 9
 has a mother touched by no impurity^a ; even she,
 whom he seems to have, had never been a bride.

^a *i.e., coitus.*

But first let me speak of his essential nature and so the manner of his birth will be understood. 10

We have already said ^a that God devised the whole universe by Word, by Reason, by Might. Among your own philosophers, too, it is argued that *Logos*, that is Word and Reason, would seem to be the Artificer of the universe. This *Logos* Zeno defines as the maker who has formed and ordered all ; he will have it that this *Logos* is also called fate and God, and mind of Jove, and universal law. All this Cleanthes gathers up into Spirit and affirms it to pervade the universe.^b We, too, to that Word, Reason and Power 11 (by which we said God devised all things) would ascribe Spirit as its proper nature ; and in Spirit, giving utterance, we should find Word ; with Spirit, ordering and disposing all things, Reason ; and over Spirit, achieving all things, Power. This,^c we have been taught, proceeds from God, begotten in this proceeding from God, and therefore called " Son of God " and " God " because of unity of nature. For God too is spirit. When a ray is 12 projected from the sun, it is a portion of the whole ;

deum namque ire per omnes
 terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum.
 hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum
 quemque sibi tenuis nascentem arcessere vitas ;

and *Aeneid*, vi. 724 ff., especially the lines:

spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
 mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

* "This" I leave as bald as *Hunc* in the Latin, on purpose. I would remind the reader that the author is pre-Nicene, and that the translator is not a theologian. The general line of Tertullian is that of the second-century apologists, in whom the simile from one light kindling another light is very familiar. The difficulties of early Latin terminology (*substantia* for *οὐσία*), *materia*, etc., are beyond discussion in a footnote.

but the sun will be in the ray, because it is the sun's ray, nor is it a division of nature, but an extension. Spirit from Spirit, God from God—as light is lit from light. The source of the substance remains whole and undiminished even if you borrow many offshoots of its quality from it. Thus what 13 has proceeded from God, is God and God's Son, and both are one. Thus Spirit from Spirit, God from God—it makes in mode a double number, in order not in condition (*status*), not departing from the source but proceeding from it.^a This ray of God, as was 14 ever foretold in time past, entered into a certain virgin, and, in her womb fashioned into flesh, is born, man mingled with God. The flesh informed by the spirit is nourished, grows to manhood, speaks, teaches, acts—and is Christ.

For the moment accept this story (it is like your own stories) while we show how Christ is proved, and who they were who, in order to destroy the truth, set about among you rival stories of the same kind.^b The Jews knew that Christ was to come, of 15 course, for it was to them that the prophets spoke. Even now the Jews look for his coming, nor is there any other greater cause of clash between us than that they do not believe he has come. Two comings were predicted for him; in the first (which is already fulfilled) he should come in the lowliness of human form; in the second, which impends for the ending of the world, it should be in the majesty of deity displayed. But the Jews misunderstood the first coming; and the second, which was more clearly foretold and for which they hope, they took to be the only one. As for the first coming—they would 16 have believed, if they had understood, and they

would have won salvation if they had believed—but what prevented them from believing was the result of their sin. They themselves read it written in scripture ^a that they have been deprived of wisdom and understanding, of the fruits of eye and ear.

From his lowly guise they took him to be merely 17
a man ; so it followed that, confronted by his power, they counted him a magician. For with a word he drove devils out of men, he gave light again to the blind, he cleansed the lepers, he braced up the paralytic, and to crown all he restored the dead to life by his word ; he made the very elements his servants, he controlled the storm, he walked on the sea,—showing that he is the *Logos* of God, that is the Word, original and first-begotten, attended by Power and Reason, upheld by Spirit, the same Being who by his word still made as he had made all things. His teach- 18
ing, with its refutation of the instructors and chief men of the Jews, so incensed them (chiefly because of the vast multitudes it turned to him) that at last they brought him to Pontius Pilate, at that time Roman procurator of Syria, and by the fury of their suffrages extorted it from Pilate that Jesus should be handed over to them to be crucified. He himself had foretold that they would do this. If that be not enough, so had the prophets long before. Yet, nailed to the 19
cross he showed many signs by which his death was distinguished from others. For with a word, of his own will, he dismissed his spirit—forestalling the work of the executioner. At that very moment, though the sun was in mid sky, day was withdrawn. An eclipse, of course, they supposed it, who did not know that this too was predicted of Christ ; yet that 20
cosmic event you have in your archives ; it is told

there. He was taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb ; the Jews with supreme care surrounded it with a great military guard, lest, since he had foretold his rising from death on the third day, his disciples by stealth should get the dead body away and trick them for all their suspicions. But, look you ! on 21 the third day, there was a sudden earthquake ; the structure that blocked the tomb was shaken down ; the guard was scattered in terror ; but though no disciples appeared on the scene, nothing was found in the tomb but the cloths in which he was buried. None the less, the chief men of the Jews—it was to their 22 interest to tell a false tale and to recapture from the faith a people to pay them tribute and yield them service ; so they spread the story about that the disciples had stolen him. For he did not display himself to the common gaze,^a lest the wicked should be set free from their misjudgement ; and that faith, with that supreme prize set before it, should not be too easy. With certain disciples he spent forty days 23 in Galilee, a region of Judaea, teaching them what they should teach. Then he appointed them to the duty of preaching throughout the world, and, with a cloud cast about him, he was caught up to heaven—far more truly than any Romulus of yours in the tale of Proculus.^b

This whole story of Christ was reported to Caesar 24 (at that time it was Tiberius) by Pilate,^c himself in his secret heart already a Christian. Yes, and the Caesars also would have believed on Christ, if Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if the Caesars, too, could have been Christians. His disciples, also, were scattered through the world, 25 in obedience to the precept of God their teacher ; they

suffered much from Jewish persecution—but gladly enough because of their faith in the truth ; finally at Rome, through the cruelty of Nero, they sowed the seed of Christian blood.^a But we will produce 26 for you as witnesses to Christ (and very appropriate for you) those very beings whom you worship. It will be a great point if I can use to make you believe in Christ the very beings for whose sake you do not believe the Christians. Meantime you have before you the facts in due order that relate to our founding ; we have given you here the origin of our school and of its name, and told you of our Founder.

Let none now fling foul charges at us ; let none 27 believe aught but what we have said ; because no one may lie about his religion. For in the very act of saying he worships something other than he does worship, he denies what he worships ; his worship and his reverence he transfers to another and by the transfer ceases to worship the God he has denied. We say—and we say it openly—while you are tortur- 28 ing us,—mangled and bleeding—we shout it : “ We worship God through Christ.” Count him man, if you will ; through him and in him God would have Himself known and worshipped. A word to the Jews ; 29 they themselves learned to worship the Lord through the man Moses. A retort to the Greeks : Orpheus in Pieria, Musaeus at Athens, Melampus at Argos, Trophonius of Boeotia, have bound men by their religious ceremonies. A glance at you also, rulers of the nations : Numa Pompilius was a man, Numa who loaded the Romans with the most fatiguing superstitions. Surely Christ too may be given leave 30 to devise deity for himself and make it his own, not as one who should mould men, stockish and still

savage, to civilization by terrorizing them with such a crowd of gods to worship as Numa did ; but as one who should give to men, highly civilized already, and misled by their own urbanity, eyes to recognize the truth. Ask the question, then, whether that deity of Christ be true. If it is in fact such a deity that 31 the recognition of it remakes a man and makes him good, then it follows that false deity must be renounced, not least when the whole scheme of it is laid bare—how, under cover of the names and images of dead men, by means of certain signs, miracles and oracles, it gains credence for its own divinity.

XXII. Yes, we say there are certain spiritual 1 natures ; nor is the name new. The philosophers know of demons, with Socrates himself watching for the will of his *daimonion*.^a Why not ? When that *daimonion* is said to have stuck to him from boyhood, a dissuasive influence—obviously from what was good. All the poets know of them ; even the untaught 2 vulgar make constant use of them in cursing ; for by way of execration they utter the name of Satan,^b the prince of this evil kind, as it were from their souls' instinctive knowledge. Angels again Plato has not denied. To both names, demon and angel, the Magi answer our summons to bear witness. But the 3

his real teaching ; but the literature of the Roman empire is full of references to *magi* and magic. Herodotus perhaps first introduced *μάγοι* to the notice of the West : i. 101, 120, 140. The Manichæan heresy is an offshoot, or indebted at least to Zoroaster. For which see Augustine, *Confessions*.

^b A similar statement as to Satan in his *De Testimonio Animæ*, 3, where the commentator suggests it is the ejaculation *malum !* that is meant. Perhaps ; but by A.D. 200 there may have been new varieties in execration.

story how certain angels corrupted themselves and how from them was produced a brood of demons yet more corrupt, condemned by God with the authors of their race and that prince whom we have named—all this is duly made known in the sacred books.^a Here 4 and now it will be enough to explain how they go to work. Their work is the ruin of man; thus spiritual wickedness from the very beginning designed the destruction of man. So on men's bodies they inflict sicknesses and other bitter calamities, and on the soul sudden extravagant bursts of violence. To assail both sides of man's nature their subtle and impalpable substance avails them. Much is possible to the 5 might of these spirits, so that, undetected by sight or sense, they are recognized more in the consequences of their action than in their action itself; as when some obscure blight lays fruit and crop low when still in flower, takes life out of the bud, or wounds them in their full growth, and when the air is tainted in some unseen way and sweeps down with wafts of pestilence.^b By a contagion similar in its 6 obscurity the breath of demons and angels achieves the corruption of the mind in foul bursts of fury and insanity, or in savage lusts, along with every kind of delusion; and of all delusions that is the greatest which they use to recommend those gods to the captive and outwitted minds of men—and it also serves to secure for themselves their peculiar diet of smell and blood, offered to their likenesses and images. And what fare more exquisite for them,^c 7 than by false sleights to turn man from contempla-

the prince of the demons. As there is no doubt about the general sense, the correction, though easier to translate literally, seems hardly needed.

tion of true deity? These false sleights I will explain, and how they work them.

Every spirit is winged; so it is with angels, so it is with demons. Thus in a moment they are everywhere; all the world is to them one spot; what is being done, and where, it is as easy for them to know as to tell. Their swiftness passes for divinity, because their real nature is unknown. So they sometimes wish to appear as doing what they merely report; and they obviously are at times the authors of mischief but never of good. The purposes of God they caught up *then* as they heard the prophets propound, *now* when they hear the lesson resound.^a It is thus, it is from these sources, that they have learnt certain appointed dates and times, and on stolen divination affect divinity. In the matter of oracles how ingeniously they can fit ambiguity to event, a Croesus, a Pyrrhus knows.^b But the boiling of the tortoise with the flesh of the lamb Apollo reported, by the method we have described; in a moment he had been in Lydia. They have their abode in the air, the stars are their neighbours, their commerce is with the clouds, so they can learn what is preparing in the sky and promise the rain, which they feel already. Mighty kind they are too in the treatment of diseases! First, they injure; then, they teach remedies new or contradictory to the point of miracle; after that they cease to injure and are believed to have healed. But why should I discuss the rest of their tricks, or the *posse* (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii. 56. 115, who just above translates the Greek "Croesus Halym penetrans magnam pervertet opum vim"). Apollo, so says Herodotus, i. 47, 48, alone among gods who give oracles, told Croesus that he had been boiling the things named, at the precise hour fixed.

power of spiritual treachery? or tell of apparitions of the Heavenly Twins, of water carried in a sieve, of a ship towed with a girdle, a beard made red with a touch^a—and all of it, that stones may be believed to be gods and the true God left unsought?

XXIII. To proceed, if magicians produce phantoms 1
and give a bad name to the souls of the dead; if they
kill children to make an oracle speak; if by mount-
bank tricks they play off no end of miracles; if they
send dreams to people; assisted by the power of the
angels and demons invoked, those same beings by
whose aid she-goats and tables have acquired the
habit of divining; how much more, think you?
would that power, acting on its own behalf and in
its own business, take pains to use its full strength to
achieve what it does in the affairs of others? Or, if 2
angels and demons do exactly what your gods do;
where, then, is the pre-eminence of divinity, which we
surely should count superior to every other power?
Will it not be a worthier supposition that it is they
who make themselves into gods when they do what
wins credence for gods, than that gods should be
on a level with angels and demons? The distinction 3
between them, I really suppose, depends on difference
of place; so that, where a temple is in the story, you
reckon them to be gods, though elsewhere you do not
call them gods; so that if a man leaps among the
temple towers he has a different sort of insanity
from one who jumps from roof to roof of his
neighbours' houses; so that a different influence is
declared to be at work in the man who castrates
himself or slashes his muscles,^b from what is in the

^a A touch at the priests of Cybele. Cf. Apuleius, *Met.*
viii. 27.

man who cuts his throat. But the outcome of the frenzy is the same, and one account must be given of its provocation.

So far, words; now for a test in actual fact, to 4 show that, whichever names you use, the nature (*qualitas*) is the same. Produce someone before your tribunals, who is admittedly demon-possessed. Let any Christian you please bid him speak, and the spirit in the man will own himself a demon—and truly—just as he will elsewhere call himself a god, falsely. Similarly bring forward some one or other of 5 those persons who are supposed to be god-possessed,^a who by sniffing at altars inhale a divine power in the smell, who cure themselves by belching, who declaim panting. Let us take your great Virgin of 6 Heaven herself,^b promiser of rain, your great Aesculapius, discoverer of medical arts, giver of life to Socordius, Thanatius, Asclepiodotus (who will die some other day all the same ^c)—if they do not confess they are demons, not daring to lie to a Christian, then shed that impudent Christian's blood on the spot! What could be plainer than such a deed? 7 What proof more reliable? The simplicity of the truth is plain to see. Its own power is in it. There can be no room for suspicion. Oh! do you say it is done by magic or some trickery of that sort? You will not say that, even if your eyes and ears let you.^d But 8 what can be set against fact displayed in naked

Pontus, and used to make antidotes; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 6. 63. Oehler thinks Tertullian may refer to a past event; but he seems to be devising a test to be tried. Waltzing translates very much as above.

^a The text again doubtful, and restored, without much gain. The translation is mere makeshift.

sincerity? If on the one hand they really *are* gods, why do they lie and say they are demons? To oblige *us*? So you see, divinity, as you understand it, is subject to Christians, but I don't think it is really to be reckoned divinity if it is subject to a man, and (if anything can add to the disgrace) to its rivals. If, 9 on the other hand, they are demons or angels, why do they reply that elsewhere they act the part of gods? For just as those beings which pass for gods would have been reluctant to call themselves demons, if they really were gods,—they would not wish, of course, to abdicate their majesty!—so those creatures, whom you definitely know to be demons, would not dare elsewhere to pass themselves off as gods, if those whose names they use were gods at all. For they would be afraid to misuse a majesty beyond doubt above them, the majesty of powers they feared. So 10 that divinity, which you maintain, is nothing of the kind; because, if it were divinity, the demons, when confessing, would not claim it, nor the gods disclaim it. So when both groups concur in confession, when both deny godhead, recognize that it is only one group—demons, on the one side and on the other.

So now try to find gods! Those whom you had 11 presumed to be gods, you learn to be demons. Once more we lend you aid^a; and from these same gods of yours, who have more to disclose than the fact that neither they nor any others are gods, there is another thing for you to learn at one and the same time, that is, who really is God, whether it is He, and only He, whom we Christians confess, and whether He requires belief and worship, on the lines of the faith and teaching of Christians.

They will also tell you, on the spot, who is "that 12

Christ with his story"—whether he was a man of the common sort; whether he was a magician; whether, after his death, his disciples stole him from the grave; whether he is now, in a word, down among the dead,^a and not rather in heaven, thence to come, amid the upheaval of the whole universe, the horror of the world, the wailing of all men (but not of the Christians!)—to come as Power of God, Spirit of God, Word, Wisdom, Reason, Son of God? Laugh at what you will ^b— 13 but let them (the demons) laugh with you! let them deny that Christ will judge every soul since time began, with its body given back to it! let them say, before your court, that Minos perchance and Rhadamanthus, as Plato and the poets agree, have this function! Let them at least get rid of the 14 brand of humiliation and damnation set upon them! They tell you that they are unclean spirits—as ought to have been understood even from their diet, the blood, the smoke, the stinking holocausts of dead beasts—and the defiled tongues of their prophets! Let them deny that for their sin they are condemned already against that same Day of Judgement, they and all their worshippers and all their works!

Yet all this sovereignty and power that we have 15 over them derives its force only from the naming of Christ, and the reminder of what they expect to come upon them from God at the judgement-seat of Christ. They are afraid of Christ in God, and of God in Christ; and that is why they are subject to the servants of God and Christ. Thus at a touch, a 16 breath from us, they are seized by the thought, by

^b Cf. the allusion to laughter at the mention of the Judgement Day, ch. 18. 4.

the foretaste of that fire, and they leave the bodies of men at our command, all against their will, in pain, blushing to have you witness it. Believe them when they tell the truth about themselves, you who believe them when they lie! No one lies simply to bring disgrace on himself—no, much rather to win credit. It is much easier to believe people when they confess against themselves than when they deny to defend themselves. 17

This kind of witness, then, offered by your gods regularly makes Christians. The more we believe them, the more we believe in Christ as Lord. They kindle our faith in our sacred books; they build up our assurance in our hope. You worship them (to the best of my knowledge) with the blood of Christians. So they would not wish to lose you, when you are so profitable, so obsequious, to them,—lest you, too, perhaps, turning Christian some day should drive them out!—they would not indeed! if only they might lie, when a Christian wishes to prove the truth to you! 18 19

XXIV. All this confession of theirs, their avowal that they are not gods, their response that there is no God but the One whose servants we are, is amply enough to repel the charge brought against us of treason above all to the religion of Rome.^a If they definitely are not gods, then definitely it is not a religion; if it is not a religion because they definitely are not gods, then we are definitely not guilty of injuring religion. On the contrary the taunt has recoiled upon you, who, by your worship of a lie, by your neglect of the true religion of the true God—and more than that—by your assault upon it, commit against the true God the crime of real irreligion. 2

Now, suppose them to be gods; but you concede, 3

do you not, on the basis of common consent, that there is a god, more sublime and more potent, Emperor as it were of the universe, of absolute power and majesty? For that is how most men apportion divinity; they hold that the control, the supreme sway, rests with one, the various functions of divinity among many. Plato,^a for instance, describes the great Jove in heaven accompanied by a host of gods and demons together. So they hold that his pro- 4 curators and prefects and presiding officers should be respected equally with him. And yet what crime does he commit, who, to win Caesar's favour more securely, transfers his attention and his hope elsewhere, and does not confess that the title of God, like that of Emperor, belongs to one supreme over all,^b when it is legally a capital offence to speak of another beside Caesar or even to listen to such talk? Let 5 one man worship God, another Jove; let this man raise suppliant hands to heaven, that man to the altar of Fides; let one (if you so suppose) count the clouds as he prays,^c another the panels of the ceiling; let one dedicate his own soul to his god, another a goat's. Look to it, whether this also may form part of the 6 accusation of irreligion—to do away with freedom of religion, to forbid a man choice of deity, so that I may not worship whom I would, but am forced to worship whom I would not. No one, not even a man, will wish to receive reluctant worship.

Why, the Egyptians are allowed full freedom in 7 their empty superstition, to make gods of birds and beasts, and to condemn to death any who may kill a god of that sort. Every individual province, every city, has its own god; Syria has Astartes^d; Arabia, Dusares; the Norici Belenus; Africa, her Heavenly

Virgin; Mauretania its chieftains.^a These provinces 8
 that I mention are, I think, Roman; but their gods
 are not Roman; for they are not worshipped at Rome
 any more than the gods honoured in Italy itself by
 municipal deification—such as Delventinus at Casi-
 num, Visidianus at Narnia, Ancharia at Asculum,
 Nortia at Volsinii, Valentia at Ocriculum, Hostia at
 Sutrium; while among the Falisci, in honour of
 Father Curis, Juno has the surname^b too. But we 9
 alone are forbidden a religion of our own. We injure
 the Romans, we are reckoned not to be Romans,
 because we do not worship the god of the Romans.
 Happy it is that God is God of all, and that all of us 10
 are His, whether we would wish it or not. But among
 you it is lawful to worship anything at all, so long as
 it is not the true God!—as if He were not rather God
 of all, whose we all are.

XXV. I think I have proved enough as to false 1
 and true deity. I have shown how the proof hangs
 together consistently, resting as it does not only on
 discussion and argument, but on the evidence of those
 beings whom you believe to be gods; so that there is
 nothing more to be dealt with on that issue. Yet, 2
 since specific mention has been made of the Roman
 name, I must not shirk the encounter challenged by
 the assumption of those who say it is as a reward for
 their eminently religious attitude that the Romans
 have reached so high a point of grandeur as to hold the
 whole world^c; and that the gods are so conspicuously
 gods that those flourish beyond all others who beyond
 all others render them obedience.

I understand, then, this reward has been paid by the 3
 commonsense (their peculiar gift), but won their empire over
 the world “*pietate et religione.*” Cf. *De Nat. Deorum*, ii. 3. 8.

Roman gods on the score of gratitude. Sterculus^a has extended their empire,—and Mutunus, and Larentina! For as to foreign gods, I would not suppose they preferred to favour an alien race rather than their own, and that they surrendered to men from across the sea their own native soil on which they were born, reared, ennobled, and in which they were buried. Let Cybele^b see to it, if she have loved the city⁴ of Rome in memory of the Trojan race, her own native race that she guarded against the arms of the Achaeans—if she looked ahead and planned to pass over to the avengers' camp, knowing that they would yet subdue Greece, conqueror of Phrygia! So it⁵ was indeed a fine proof of her greatness transferred to Rome that she offered in our own generation. The State lost Marcus Aurelius by death at Sirmium on the 17th of March^c; but on the 24th,^d his holiness the arch-eunuch, offering his own unclean blood and slashing his muscles, issued the usual orders to pray for the safety of Marcus, who was already dead. O sluggish messengers! O sleepy-headed⁶ postal service! it was your fault that Cybele failed to hear earlier of the Emperor's death, to prevent Christians from laughing at such a goddess! Jupiter too would hardly be in a hurry to let his own⁷ Crete tumble before the Roman fasces—forgetting that cave on Ida, the cymbals of the Corybantes, that too delicious odour of his nurse^e there! Would not he have preferred that grave of his^f to any Capitol, on this theory of Euhemerus and graves of gods). Compare also Callimachus:

Κρήτες αὐεὶ ψεύσται, καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ὧ ἄνα, σείο
 Κρήτες ἐτεκτῆναντο· σὺ δ' οὐ θάνας, ἔσαι γὰρ αὐεὶ,
 quoted by Origen, *Against Celsus*, iii. 43. Lactantius, i. 11,
 says the grave bore the inscription ZAN KRONOY.

APOLOGETICUS, xxv. 7-11

that the world should bow to the land which covered
the ashes of Jove? Would Juno wish the Punic 8
city that she loved "yea, above Samos' self,"^c to
be destroyed by the race of Aeneas of all people?
To the best of my knowledge

Here were her arms,
Her chariot here; this city, the world's queen
Yet to become, if but the fates allow,
The goddess cherishes.^b

Poor "wife of Jove and sister,"^c she could do
nothing against the fates! Obviously

By fate Jove's self must stand.

Yet somehow the Romans have not paid so much 9
honour to the fates that gave them Carthage, clean
against the plan and prayer of Juno, as to that
strumpet of a she-wolf, Larentina.

It is established that several of your gods once 10
were kings. If then they possess the power of
bestowing empire, seeing they were kings, from
whom did they receive that privilege? Whom had
Saturn worshipped, and Jove? Some Sterculus or
other, I presume. (The Romans came later with their
catalogues of gods.) Further if some of the gods were 11
not kings, they were reigned over by others, who were
not yet their worshippers—for they were not yet
reckoned to be gods.^d It follows that it belongs to

made them kings and gave them such rights? But some
were not kings at all, and were reigned over by others who
did not worship them, as they were not yet deified. But if
there were kings before these gods were gods, the right to
bestow empire rests, not with the gods, but elsewhere. This
clears out Saturn and his family. *Tamen* remains to perplex
reader and translator, and more desperate remedies may be
needed for the text.

others to bestow kingship, since there were kings long before those gods had their names carved on stone.

But how absurd it is to set down the glory of the 12 Roman name as the reward of religious feeling, when it is only since the empire (or perhaps it was still kingdom) was achieved, that the religion made its forward strides! Even if that nicety in superstition was conceived by Numa, not yet among the Romans did service of the gods rest on images or temples. It was frugal religion, the rites of poverty, no 13 Capitol vying with the sky, but chance altars of turf, pottery still Samian, and the smell rising from the pots,—and the god himself nowhere! Not yet had men of genius, Greek and Tuscan, flooded the city, to make images. So the Romans were not “religious” before they were great; and, it follows, they are not great because they were religious. How 14 could they be great because of their religion, when their greatness came from irreligion? Unless I am mistaken, all kingship or empire is sought in war and extended by victory. War and victory depend on the capture and generally the overthrow of cities. That business is not put through, without injury to the gods. Walls and temples have one destruction; citizens and priests alike are slain; the plunder of wealth is the same whether it is sacred property or that of laymen. Then the sacrileges of the 15 Romans are exactly as many as their trophies; their triumphs over gods as many as over races; their spoils in war as many as the statues still left of captured gods. And (we are told) the gods can 16 bear to be adored by their enemies and decree to them “empire sans end”^a—when they ought to have

^a *Aeneid*, i. 279.

repaid their injuries rather than their homage. But those who feel nothing, it is as safe to hurt as it is vain to court. Certainly it cannot square with belief 17 that *they* should be supposed to have grown great as a reward of religion, who, as we have shown, did religion wrong and so grew strong, or growing strong did it wrong. Those also whose kingdoms were melted down to make the sum total of the Roman empire,—when they lost those kingdoms, they too were not without religions of their own.

XXVI. Look to it then, lest it prove that He dis- 1
penses the kingdoms, Whose is the world that is reigned over and the man who reigns; lest it be He that has ordained the progression of empires each at its time in the world's story, He who was ere time was, who made the world's story of all the times; lest it be He who extols the cities or brings them low, He under whom mankind was once without cities at all. Why blunder? Rome in the forest ^a 2
is older than some of her gods; she reigned before she built that great circuit of the Capitol. And Babylonians reigned before there were Roman pontiffs, Medes before there were Quindecimviri, Egyptians before there were Salii, Assyrians before there were Luperci, Amazons before there were Vestal Virgins. Finally, if Rome's religious observ- 3
ances give her the kingdoms, never in olden days would Judaea have reigned, Judaea who despised those deities of the nations; and yet time was when you Romans honoured Judaea's God with victims, her temple with gifts, her race with treaties, nor would you ever have lorded it over her, if she had not at the last sinned against Christ.

XXVII. So much is enough to rebut the charge of 1

APOLOGETICUS, xxvii. 1-7

injuring deity—since we cannot be thought to injure what we have proved non-existent.^a So, when challenged to sacrifice, we stand immovable in loyalty to our conscience, certain in our knowledge whose are those services with their profane idols, and their deification of human names. But some people think 2 it madness, that, though we could for the moment sacrifice and go away unhurt, with a mental reservation, we prefer “obstinacy”^b to safety. That is to 3 say, you advise us how to cheat you. But we recognize the source of these hints; who it is that sets it all in motion; how, sometimes by cunning ruse, sometimes by cruel rage, he works to overthrow our constancy. That spirit of demonic and angelic nature, 4 our rival because we are severed from him,^c our enemy because God gives us grace, battles against us with your hearts for his base—your hearts tuned and suborned (as I said at the beginning) to perverse judgement and to savage rage. For though all the 5 power of demons and spirits of that sort be subject to us, still, like rascal slaves, they mingle insolence with their fear, and delight to injure those whom at other times they dread. For fear also is a source of hate. And, besides, in their desperate condition of being 6 condemned already, they count it consolation to gratify their spite while their punishment delays. And yet, when recognized, they are subdued and succumb to their condition; hostile to us from afar, face to face they entreat us. So when like rebels 7 breaking out of slave-pens, jails or mines, or that sort of penal servitude, they break out against us (in quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.” Also ch. 50 of this *Apology*.

^a *Ob divortium* is taken by some as his revolt from God.

whose power they are)—though they well know they are no match for us and are only so much the more damned for it,—we have no choice but to hold our ground against them, conscious we are a match for them^a; we put up a fight against them, and stand stubbornly on the point they assail. And our triumph over them is never greater than when for our obstinacy in our faith we are condemned.

XXVIII. It might easily seem unjust that free 1 men should be compelled to sacrifice against their will, for in other acts of divine service a willing mind is enjoined.^b It would certainly seem silly for a man to be forced by another to honour the gods whom he ought to wish to please on his own account—forced to do it, that he might not use a freeman's right and rejoin offhand: "I don't want Jove to be propitious to me; who are you? Let Janus confront me in anger, with either face he pleases; what have I to do with you?" But you have been instructed of course by those very same evil spirits, to compel us to sacrifice for the health of the Emperor^c; the necessity is laid upon you to compel us, just as much as the duty is laid upon us to face the danger.

So now we have come to the second charge, the 2 charge of treason against a majesty more august.^d For it is with greater fear and shrewder timidity that you watch Caesar, than Olympian Jove himself. Quite right too, if you only knew it! For who among the living, whoever he be, is not better than a dead man? But it is not reason that makes you do this so much as 3 regard for power that can act on the instant. So that in this too you will be found irreligious to those gods

^a See note on ch. 24. 1.

of yours, when you show more fear for the rule of a man. In fact, among you perjury by all the gods together comes quicker than by the genius^a of a single Caesar.

XXIX. First, then, let it be established whether 1 those beings, to whom sacrifice is offered, can give safety to the Emperor or to anybody at all; and then impeach us on the charge of treason, if it appears that angels or demons, in their natures the worst of spirits, do any good service; if the lost can save; if the damned can give freedom; if, in a word (and this is in your secret hearts), if the dead can protect the living. For they really would 2 begin by protecting their own statues and images and temples; which, I take it, are really kept safe by the soldiers of the Caesars on duty. I think, though, that the material of which they are made comes from Caesar's mines; and whole temples rest on Caesar's nod. Many gods ere now have felt Caesar's wrath. It 3 bears on the case, too, if they have found Caesar propitious—in conferring on them something by way of largesse or privilege. So, I ask, how will they, who are in Caesar's power, who belong to Caesar outright, have Caesar's safety in their power, that you should suppose them able to secure for him the safety which they themselves more easily have from Caesar? So, after 4 all, our crime against the majesty of the Emperors comes to this: that we do not subordinate them to their property; that we do not make a jest of our care for their safety, and do not think it really lies in hands soldered on with lead.^b But it is you who are the 5 really religious people—you who seek Caesar's safety where it is not, who pray for it from those by whom it cannot be given, who pass by Him in whose power

it is. Yes, and more than that, you wage war on those who know how to pray for it, and who can obtain it too, since they know how to pray for it.

XXX. For we, on behalf of the safety of the 1 Emperors,^a invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, whom the Emperors themselves prefer to have propitious to them beyond all other gods. They know who has given them the empire ; they know, as men, who has given them life ; they feel that He is God alone, in whose power and no other's they are, second to whom they stand, after whom they come first, before all gods and above all gods. Why not ? seeing that they are above all men, and men at any rate live and so are better than dead things. They 2 reflect how far the strength of their empire avails, and thus they understand God ; against Him they cannot avail, so they know it is through Him that they do avail. Let the Emperor, as a last test, make war on heaven, carry heaven captive in his triumph, set a guard on heaven, lay taxes on heaven. He cannot. So he is great, because he is less than heaven.^b He 3 himself belongs to Him, whose is heaven and all creation. Thence comes the Emperor, whence came the man before he was Emperor ; thence his power, whence his spirit. Looking up to heaven the 4 Christians—with hands outspread, because innocent, with head bare because we do not blush,^c yes ! and without one to give the form of words,^d for we pray from the heart,—we are ever making intercession for all the Emperors. We pray for them long life, a secure rule, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, an honest people, a quiet world—and every-
on being verbally precise. Tertullian here states another conception of prayer.

thing for which a man and a Caesar can pray. All this 5
 I cannot ask of any other but only of Him, from whom
 I know I shall receive it, since He it is who alone gives
 and I am one to whom the answer to prayer is due,
 His servant, who alone worships Him, who for His
 teaching am slain, who offer to Him that rich and
 better sacrifice which He himself commanded—I
 mean prayer, proceeding from flesh pure, soul inno-
 cent, spirit holy. Not grains of incense worth one 6
 halfpenny, tears of an Arabian tree, not two drops of
 wine, not blood of a worthless ox longing to die, and
 on top of all sorts of pollution a conscience unclean ;—
 so that I wonder why, when among you victims are
 being examined by the most vicious of priests, the
 breasts of the victims rather than of the sacrificers
 should be inspected. While thus, then, we spread our- 7
 selves before God, let the hooks pierce us, the crosses
 suspend us, the fires play upon us, the swords gash our
 throats, the beasts leap on us. The very posture of
 the Christian at prayer is readiness for any torture.
 Go to it, my good magistrates, rack out the soul that
 prays to God for the Emperor. Here lies the crime—
 where God's truth is, where devotion to God is.

XXXI. Ah! but we have been flattering the 1
 Emperor; we lied about those prayers we alleged—
 to avoid being roughly dealt with, of course. Your
 cleverness, in so saying, helps us however. For you
 give us a chance to prove whatever point we bring
 up in our defence.^a You, sir, then, who fancy we
 care nothing for Caesar's safety, look into the words
 of God, into our books, which we do not hide, and
 which many a chance throws into the hands of out-
 siders. Learn from them, that the precept is given 2
 us (to the point of overflow of kindness) to pray to

God even for our enemies, to beseech His blessings for our persecutors. Who are more the enemies and the persecutors of Christians, than those against whose majesty we are accused of treason? But here 3 it is explicitly named and in plain terms. "Pray," he says "for kings, and for princes and powers, that all things may be tranquil for you." ^a For when the empire is shaken, when the rest of its members are shaken, we, too, of course, though we are supposed not to have anything to do with the disorder, ^b are found in some corner of the disaster.

XXXII. There is another need, a greater one, for 1 our praying for the Emperors, and for the whole estate of the empire and the interests of Rome. ^c We know that the great force which threatens the whole world, the end of the age itself with its menace of hideous suffering, is delayed by the respite which the Roman empire means for us. ^d We do not wish to experience all that; and when we pray for its postponement are helping forward the continuance of Rome.

We make our oaths, too, not by "the genius of 2 the Caesar," but by his health, which is more august than any genius. Do you not know that *genius* is a name for *demon*, or in the diminutive *daemonium*? We respect the judgement of God in the Emperors, who has set them over the nations. We know that to 3 be in them which God wished to be there, and so we wish that safe, which God wished; and we count that

writers are *not* hostile to the Roman Empire; they wish not to be persecuted naturally, but otherwise they recognize the value of the government and do not wish it to be changed. The Pauline view prevails as against the purely Jewish.

a great oath. But demons, or geniuses, we are accustomed to exorcize, in order to drive them out of men—not to swear by them and so give them the honour of divinity.

XXXIII. But why need I say more of the religious 1
awe, the piety, of Christians, where the Emperor is
concerned? We must needs respect him as the chosen
of our Lord. So I have a right to say, Caesar is 2
more ours than yours, appointed as he is by our
God. He is mine; and so I do more for his safety,—
not only because I seek it from Him only who can
give it; or because I who ask am one who deserve to
receive; but also because I set the majesty of Caesar
below God and the more commend him to God to
Whom alone I subordinate him. This I do, in that
I do not make him equal to God. For I will not call 3
the Emperor God for various reasons, as that I
“know not to lie,”^a that I dare not mock him, that he
himself will not wish to be called God. If he is a man,
it is a man’s interest to yield place to God. Let
him be satisfied to be called Emperor. And a great
name it is, too, that God gives him! The man denies
he is Emperor, who says he is God. Unless he is a
man, he is not Emperor. Even in the triumph, as 4
he rides in that most exalted chariot, he is reminded
that he is a man. It is whispered to him from
behind: “Look behind thee; remember thou art
a man.” That he is in such a blaze of glory that the
reminder of his mortal state is necessary for him—
makes it the more delightful to him. He would be
less, if he were at that moment called a god, because
it would not be true. He is greater, who is called
to look back, lest he think himself a god.

XXXIV. Augustus, who framed the empire, was 1

unwilling to be called so much as Lord^a; for that also is a name of God. I will frankly call the Emperor Lord, but only in the ordinary way. but only when force is not brought to bear on me to call him Lord in the sense of God. But I am a free man as far as the Emperor is concerned; for my Lord is One, God omnipotent, eternal, who is also the Emperor's Lord. He who is "Father of his Country," how is² he its *lord*? But there is more pleasure in the name of affection than in the name of power. Even in the family we say *paterfamilias* rather than lord.^b So far is it from being right for the Emperor to be called god,—a name incredible save in flattery not merely abject but injurious.^c It would be much the³ same as if, when one man was Emperor, you called another man by that name—would you not incur the deepest displeasure, and quite inexorable, in the real Emperor, not without danger at the same time for the man to whom you have given the name? Be you religious toward God, you who wish Him propitious to the Emperor. Cease to believe there is another God; and cease in the same way to call him God, who needs God. If flattery does not⁴ blush at the lie, when it calls such a man God, let it fear the uncanny side of it; it is a curse before his apotheosis to call Caesar god.^d

XXXV. So that is why Christians are public¹ enemies,—because they will not give the Emperors vain, false and rash honours; because, being men of a true religion, they celebrate the Emperors' festivals

Nero vetoed it, afraid (Tacitus says) that someone would twist the proposal into an omen portending his death; for divine honours were not given to an Emperor till his career among men was ended.

more in heart than in frolic. Splendid service, I 2
 assure you! to bring braziers and couches out into the
 open air, street by street to dine together,^a to make the
 city look like nothing but a tavern, to make mud with
 wine, to rush about in droves for outrage, impudence
 and the incitements to lust. Is it thus that a people's
 joy is expressed in public shame? Does such con-
 duct befit the festal days of princes, when it ill befits
 other days? Men who maintain order out of regard 3
 for Caesar, are they to abandon it for Caesar's sake?
 Shall their good feeling for him be their licence to
 follow bad ways? shall religion be reckoned as an
 occasion for indulgence? Oh it is we deserve to be 4
 condemned! For why do we perform our vows
 and celebrate our joys for the Caesars, chaste, sober
 and decent? Why on the glad day do we not hang
 our doors with laurels and intrude upon the daylight
 with lamps?^b It is the honest man's duty, when
 a great public occasion calls, to rig your house up
 like some new brothel!

I should like, though, in dealing with this religion of 5
 a second majesty,^c in which we Christians are charged
 with a second sacrilege because we do not celebrate
 the holidays of the Caesars with you in a way which
 neither modesty, decency, nor chastity permits
 —a way recommended by the chance of pleasure
 rather than by proper thought—I should like, I say,
 to exhibit *your* loyalty and truth, in case here, too,
 those who will not allow us to be counted Romans
 but enemies of the Roman princes, may be proved
 worse even than Christians. I arraign the Quirites 6
 themselves, and the native plebs of the seven hills—
 does that Roman tongue spare any one of its Caesars?

^c *i.e.*, next after the gods.

The Tiber ^a shall be witness, and the training-schools of the beasts. If Nature had covered our breasts with some transparent material that would let the light through, whose heart would not appear engraved with the picture of one new Caesar after another, presiding over the distribution of largesse? Yes, even in the very hour when they are shouting :

Jupiter take our years to add to thine. ^b

A Christian can no more utter these words than wish for a new Caesar. ^c

But that is the common herd, you say. Common 8 herd, if you will, but Romans; and there are none more apt to shout for the death of the Christians than the common herd. But, of course, the other orders of society stand religiously for authority, as their loyalty requires! There is never a whiff of hostility from Senate, knight, camp, or the palace itself! And 9 whence a Cassius, a Niger, an Albinus? Whence those who between two laurels lie in wait for Caesar? Whence those who practise wrestling with a view to strangling him? Whence those who, with weapon in hand, break into his palace, more daring than any Sigerius or Parthenius? ^d From among Romans,

^a The laurels are an unsolved riddle (*cf.* Martial, iv. 78). Commodus was strangled in A.D. 192 by a wrestler with whom he used to train. *Script. Hist. August., Commodus*, 17. Avidius Cassius was a usurper in the time of Marcus Aurelius (his life is in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*); Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus attempted to seize the imperial throne on the death of Commodus, the one supported by the army in Syria, the other by that of Britain. Those who broke into the palace killed the Emperor Pertinax (Dio Cass. lxxiv. 9). So much was quite recent history. Sigerius and Parthenius were among the murderers of Domitian. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapter v.

unless I am mistaken, from among non-Christians. Yes, yes, every one of them, right up to the moment 10 of the outburst of impiety, was offering sacrifice for the health of the Emperor, was swearing by his genius, some outdoors, some indoors,^a and you may be sure they were giving the Christians the name of public enemies.

But to come to our own times, and the daily 11 revelations as to the accomplices in guilty plots and those who applaud them (the gleanings that remain after a whole vintage of assassins!)—how very fresh, how very bushy, were the laurels with which they decked their doors! how very high, how very bright, the lamps with which they smoked the halls! how very splendid and how very proud the couches with which they divided the forum among them! No, not to celebrate the people's joys, but to study some private prayers of their own; in the midst of the festival of others to inaugurate the pattern and picture of their own hopes, changing the *name* of the Emperor in their hearts.^b

The same duty and service are rendered by those 12 who consult the astrologers, the soothsayers, the augurs and the magicians as to the life of the Caesars—arts made known by the angels that forsook God, arts which God has forbidden, which Christians never use even in their own private affairs. What man has any need to pry into the question of Caesar's safety, unless it be one whose thoughts or wishes are hostile to Caesar's safety, or whose hopes or expectations look to something later? For very different is the spirit in which such inquiries are made where men's the Emperor killed many on the charge "quasi Chaldaeos aut vates de sua salute consulissent."

dear ones are involved and where their masters. A kinsman's anxiety and a slave's show different types of curiosity.

XXXVI. If it comes to this that men who were 1 called Romans are found to be enemies, why are we, who are thought to be enemies, denied the name of Romans? It is impossible to say that we are not Romans because we are enemies, when enemies are discovered who were counted Romans.^a The piety, 2 the religious attitude, the loyalty, owed to Emperors does not consist of such observances as hostility may perform to cloak its intentions; but in that type of character which God as truly requires of us to show our right feeling towards the Emperor as He requires it in the case of all men. For it is not 3 to Emperors alone that we owe these works of a good heart. No exception of persons is allowed in any good action we discharge; for we do it for ourselves—not that we plan to get any return in praise or recompense from man, but from God, who requires and rewards a benevolence that makes no distinction between persons. We are the same to the Emperors 4 as we are to our neighbours. For to wish evil, to do evil, to speak evil, to think evil of any—are all equally forbidden to us. What we may not do to the Emperor, we may not do to any man. What we may do to no man, so much the more, I take it, must we not do to him, who through God is so great.

XXXVII. If, as we said above, we are bidden love 1 our enemies, whom have we to hate? Again, if, when a man injures us, we are forbidden to retaliate, that the action may not make us alike, whom then can we injure? Look at this, yourselves, and think 2 it over! How often do you wreak your fury on the

Christians, in part obeying your own instincts, in part the laws? How often, too, without regard to you,^a does the unfriendly mob on its own account assail us with stones and fire? Mad as Bacchanals, they spare not even the Christian dead; no! from the repose of the grave, from what I may call death's asylum, changed as the bodies may be, or mere fragments—they will have them out, rip and rend them. Yet I ask, though Christians are so sworn to 3 one purpose, so ready for death itself, what retaliation for injury can you charge against us, though a single night and a few little torches could work a lavish revenge, if among us wrong might be wiped out with wrong? But away with the thought that God's school should either avenge itself with man's fire, or resent the suffering that is its probation!

For if we wished to play the part of open enemies, 4 and not merely hidden avengers, should we lack the power that numbers and battalions give? Oh, of course, the Moors, the Marcomanni, yes, and the Parthians—or any other races, as great as you please, but of one region with their own frontiers—are more numerous than the race that covers the world! We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything you have—cities, islands,^b forts, towns, exchanges, yes! and camps, tribes, decuries,^c palace, senate, forum. All we have left to you is the temples! [We can count your troops; the Christians of one province will be more in number.] For what war 5 should we not have been fit and ready even if unequal in forces—we who are so glad to be butchered—were it not, of course, that in our doctrine we are given ampler liberty to be killed than to kill?

Why! without taking up arms, without rebellion, 6

simply by standing aside, by mere ill-natured separation, we could have fought you! For if so vast a mass of people as we had broken away from you and removed to some recess of the world apart, the mere loss of so many citizens of whatever sort would have brought a blush^a to your rule—yes, that it would, and punished you, too, by sheer desertion! Beyond 7 doubt, you would have shuddered at your solitude, at the silence in the world, the stupor as it were of a dead globe. You would have had to look about for people to rule.^b You would have had more enemies left than citizens. For, as things are, you have fewer 8 enemies because of the multitude of the Christians, when nearly all the citizens you have in nearly all the cities are Christian.^c But you have preferred to call us enemies of the human race rather than of human error.

But who would rescue you from those secret enemies 9 that everywhere lay waste your minds and your bodily health? I mean, from the assaults of demons, whom we drive out of you, without reward, without pay. Why, this alone would have sufficed to avenge us—to leave you open and exposed to unclean spirits with immediate possession! But no such thing! 10 Far from thinking of any reward for us for protection so great, you have preferred to account a race of men, not merely harmless to you, but necessary, to be enemies. And so we are—enemies, that is, not of the human race, but of human error.

XXXVIII. I proceed. Was not a rather gentler 1 treatment in order? Should not this school have been classed among tolerated associations, when it commits no such actions as are commonly feared from un-

lawful associations? ^a For, unless I am mistaken, ² the reason for prohibiting associations clearly lay in forethought for public order—to save the State from being torn into parties, a thing very likely to disturb election assemblies, public gatherings, local senates, meetings, even the public games, with the clashing and rivalry of partisans, especially since men had begun to reckon on their violence as a source of revenue, offering it for sale at a price. We, how- ³ ever, whom all the flames of glory and dignity leave cold, have no need to combine; nothing is more foreign to us than the State. One state we know, of which all are citizens—the universe. ^b

Your public games, too, we renounce, as heartily ⁴ as we do their origins; we know these origins lie in superstition; we leave on one side the matters with which they are concerned. We have nothing to do, in speech, sight or hearing, with the madness of the circus, the shamelessness of the theatre, the savagery of the arena, the vanity of the gymnasium. Why should we offend you, if we assume ⁵ the existence of other pleasures? If we do not wish to know delight, it is our loss; in any case, not yours. But we reject what pleases you; what pleases us gives you no delight. But the Epicureans were allowed to maintain their theory of what true pleasure is; they found it in calm of mind; † and for Christian there is ample occupation. †

XXXIX. I will now show you the proceedings with ¹ which the Christian association occupies itself^c; I have proved they are not wrong; so now I will make you

^a Compare the account of Christian worship given by Pliny to Trajan, *Epp.* x. 96, and by Justin (mid second century), *Apology*, 67.

see they are good. We are a society (*corpus*) with a common religious feeling, unity of discipline, a common bond of hope. We meet in gathering and 2 congregation to approach God in prayer, massing our forces to surround Him. This violence that we do Him pleases God. We pray also for Emperors, for their ministers and those in authority, for the security of the world, for peace on earth, for postponement of the end. We meet to read the books of God—if 3 anything in the nature of the times bids us look to the future or open our eyes to facts. In any case, with those holy words we feed our faith, we lift up our hope, we confirm our confidence; and no less we reinforce our teaching by inculcation of God's precepts.^a There is, besides, exhortation in our gatherings, rebuke, divine censure. For judgement 4 is passed, and it carries great weight, as it must among men certain that God sees them; and it is a notable foretaste of judgement to come, if any man has so sinned as to be banished from all share in our prayer, our assembly, and all holy intercourse. Our presidents are elders of proved character, men who have reached this honour not for a price, but by character; for nothing that is God's goes for a price.

Even if there is a chest of a sort, it is not made 5 up of money paid in entrance-fees, as if religion were a matter of contract.^b Every man once a month brings some modest coin—or whenever he wishes, and only if he does wish, and if he can; for nobody is compelled; it is a voluntary offering.^c You might call them the trust funds of piety. For they are 6 not spent upon banquets nor drinking-parties nor

^a Cf. 2 Cor. ix. 7.

thankless eating-houses^a; but to feed the poor and to bury them, for boys and girls who lack property and parents, and then for slaves grown old^b and shipwrecked mariners; and any who may be in mines, islands or prisons, provided that it is for the sake of God's school, become the pensioners of their confession.

Such work of love (for so it is) puts a mark upon us, 7
in the eyes of some.^c "Look," they say, "how they
love one another" (for themselves hate one
another); "and how they are ready to die for each
other" (for themselves will be readier to kill each
other). Yes, their indignation at us for using among 8
ourselves the name of "Brothers" must really, I take
it, come from nothing but the fact that among them
every name of kinship so far as affection goes is false
and feigned. But we are your brothers, too, by
right of descent from the one mother, Nature—even
if you fall short of being men because you are bad
brothers. But how much more fittingly are those 9
both called brothers and treated as brothers who
have come to know one Father God, who have drunk
of one Spirit of holiness,^d who from one womb of
common ignorance have come with wonder to the
one light of Truth! But perhaps the reason for our 10
being thought not quite legitimate brothers may
be that no tragedy cries aloud of our brotherhood,
or because our brotherhood is upheld by the family
substance, which among you as a rule dissolves the
fraternal tie.

So we, who are united in mind and soul, have no 11
hesitation about sharing property. All is common

^a Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 13; in the Vulgate, "et omnes in uno spiritu potati sumus."

among us—except our wives. At that point we dis- 12
 solve our partnership, which is the one place where
 the rest of men make it effective. Not only do they
 use the wives of their friends, but also most patiently
 yield their own to their friends. They follow (I
 take it) the example of those who went before them,
 the wisest of men—Greek Socrates and Roman
 Cato, who shared with their friends the wives they had
 taken in marriage, to bear children in other families
 too. And I don't know whether the wives objected ; 13
 for why should they care about a chastity, which
 their husbands gave away so easily? O model of
 Attic wisdom! O pattern of Roman dignity!
 The philosopher a pander, and the censor,^a too!

What wonder then, if friends so dear have a 14
 common meal? For you attack our small feasts,
 quite apart from the infamy of the crimes com-
 mitted at them, as being extravagant. Of course
 it was of Christians that Diogenes said that the
 Megarians market as if to die to-morrow, and build
 as if they were never to die at all. But any man sees
 a mote in another's eye more easily than a beam
 in his own. With all those tribes and senates and 15
 decurions belching the air grows sour. When the
 Salii^b dine, the money-lender will be needed.
 Actuaries will have to reckon the cost of Hercules'
 tithes^c and banquets. At the Attic Apaturia,
 Dionysia and mysteries, conscription is proclaimed
 —for cooks. The smoke of a dinner of Serapis
 will fetch out the firemen. It is only the banquet
 of Christians that calls for criticism.

^b Cf. Horace, *Odes*, i. 37. 2.

^c See note on 14. 1.

Our dinner shows its idea in its name ; it is called 16
 by the Greek name for love (*agape*).^a Whatever the
 cost, it is gain to spend in piety's name, for with
 that refreshment we help the needy. No, not, as
 among you, parasites aspire for the glory of selling
 their freedom, authorized by their belly to fatten
 themselves at the cost of any insult ; no, because
 with God there is greater consideration for those
 of lower degree. If the motive of the banquet is 17
 honest, take the motive as the standard of the
 other proceedings required by our rule of life. Since
 it turns on the duty of religion, it allows nothing vile,
 nothing immodest. We do not take our places at
 table until we have first tasted prayer to God. Only 18
 so much is eaten as satisfies hunger ; only so much
 drunk as meets the need of the modest. They satisfy
 themselves only so far as men will who recall that
 even during the night they must worship God ;
 they talk as those would who know the Lord listens.
 After water for the hands come the lights ; and
 then each, from what he knows of the Holy Scrip-
 tures, or from his own heart, is called before the
 rest to sing ^b to God ; so that is a test of how much
 he has drunk. Prayer in like manner ends the
 banquet. Then we break up ; but not to form 19
 groups for violence nor gangs for disorder, nor out-
 bursts of lust ; but to pursue the same care for
 self-control and chastity, as men who have dined
 not so much on dinner as on discipline.

This gathering of Christians may properly be called 20
 illegal, if it is like illegal gatherings ; may properly
 be condemned, if any complain of it on the score on
 which complaint is made of factious clubs. To whose 21
 hurt have we ever met ? We are when assembled

just what we are when apart ; taken together the same as singly ; we injure none ; we grieve none. When decent people, when good men, gather, when the pious and when the chaste assemble, that is not to be called a faction ; it is a Senate.

XL. On the other hand the name faction may 1 properly be given to those who join to hate the good and honest, who shout for the blood of the innocent, who use as a pretext to defend their hatred the absurdity that they take the Christians to be the cause of every disaster to the State, of every misfortune of the people. If the Tiber reaches the 2 walls,^a if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn't move^b or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once : " The Christians to the lion ! " What, all of them to one lion ?

I ask you—before Tiberius, that is before Christ 3 came, what great disasters smote the world and the city ? We read that Hieria, Anaphe, and Delos and Rhodes and Cos, whole islands with thousands of inhabitants went to ruin. Plato tells of a land greater 4 than Asia or Africa swept away by the Atlantic.^c More still, an earthquake swallowed the Corinthian sea, and the force of the waters tore off Lucania from Italy and banished it to bear the name Sicily. I hardly suppose these things could have happened without hurt to the inhabitants.

Where, then, in those days, were—I won't say the 5 Christians who despise your gods—but your gods themselves, where were they when the deluge blotted out a whole world, or, as Plato thought, merely the historical disasters of the same kind in the Mediterranean area.

plains ? For your gods are later than the catastrophe 6
of the flood, and that is proved by the actual cities in
which they were born and died, yes, and which they
founded ; for otherwise they would not remain till
to-day, unless they were later than that catastrophe.
Not yet had Palestine received the swarm of Jews 7
from Egypt, the race whence came the Christian
school had not yet settled there, when a rain of fire
burnt up Sodom and Gomorrha, the regions on its
borders. The land still smells of burning ; and, if any
apples are on the trees, the trees' endeavour is but
to reach the eye ; touch them, and they are ashes.
Nor were Tuscany in those old days and Campania 8
complaining of the Christians, when fire from heaven
drenched Volsinii, fire from its own mountain Pompeii.
No one yet in Rome was worshipping the true God,
when Hannibal at Cannae measured his massacre by
the bushels of Roman rings. All your gods were 9
being worshipped by all of you, when the Senones
took the Capitol itself.^a And it is just as well that,
whatever disaster befel the cities, there was the same
ruin for temples as for city walls ; so that I can make
the point, that this did not come from the gods be-
cause it came to them.

The human race has always deserved ill of God, 10
first as being careless of Him—for, though under-
standing Him in part, it not only failed to seek
Him but quickly devised other gods for its worship ;
next,—because, refusing to seek the Teacher of
innocence, the Judge and Avenger of guilt, it
grew inured to every vice and crime. But if it 11
had sought Him out, it would follow that it would
recognize Him when found ; and, known, it would
worship Him ; and God worshipped it would find

more propitious than God angry. Mankind should know the same God to be angry to-day, who was ever angry of old, before ever Christians were named. It was His blessings that mankind used, 12 given before ever men fashioned gods for themselves; then why does humanity not understand that evils also come from Him, whom it did not realize to be author of the blessings? The race is guilty before Him to whom it is ungrateful.

And yet if we compare ancient disasters, the 13 troubles nowadays are lighter, since the world received the Christians from God. Since that day innocence has tempered the sins of the world, and there have begun to be intercessors with God. For in- 14 stance, when prolonged summer delays winter's rain^a and the crops cause anxiety,^b you, well fed every day, and soon to eat again—baths, taverns, brothels all at work—you sacrifice rain-offerings to Jove, enjoin the bare-foot procession on the people, seek heaven at the Capitol, look for rain from the temple ceilings, with your backs turned to God Himself and to heaven. We, parched with fasting, pinched with every austerity, abstaining from all food that sustains life, wallowing in sackcloth and ashes, importune heaven 15 with reproach, we touch God; and then, when we have wrung mercy from Him,—Jupiter has all the glory!

XLI. It is you, then, who are the danger to 1 mankind, it is you who bring upon us public misfortunes—you, by your contempt for God and your worship of statues. In any case it ought to be more credible that He is angry, seeing that He is neglected rather than they who are worshipped. Otherwise, your gods are most unjust, if because of the Christians

they injure their own worshippers too, whom they ought to keep clear of the punishment of the Christians.

“ But this,” you say, “ can be retorted upon your 2
 God too, since He Himself because of the profane
 suffers His own worshippers to be injured.” First
 admit His disposition of events, and then you will not
 turn this against Him. For He who has ordained 3
 eternal judgement once for all after the end of the
 world does not hasten to make that separation (which
 is the essence of the judgement) before the end of
 the world. Meantime He treats all mankind equally,
 both in concession and in warning. He has wished the
 pleasant things of life to be shared by the profane, the
 unpleasant by His own, that by an equality of lot we
 might make trial of His gentleness and His severity.
 Because we have thus learnt of Him, we love His 4
 gentleness, we dread His severity ; you, on the other
 hand, despise both the one and the other. It follows
 that all the plagues of the world (it may be) come on
 us for admonition, on you for chastisement, from God.

Yet we are none the worse for it ; first, because 5
 nothing matters to us in this age but to escape from it
 with all speed ; and next, because, if any trouble is
 inflicted upon us, we set it down to your sins. But,
 even if things now and then touch us in passing be-
 cause we live so close to you, we only rejoice the more
 to recognize the divine predictions, and they (to be
 sure) confirm our confidence, our faith in our hope.
 But if, on the other hand, all these evils come on you 6
 from the gods you worship, and come because of us,
 why persevere in worshipping gods so unjust and so
 ungrateful, who ought rather to be helping and sup-
 porting you while the Christians are suffering ?

XLII. But there is another charge of wrong-doing 1
upon the sheet against us. We are said to be un-
profitable in business. How so—when we are human
beings and live alongside of you—men with the same
ways, the same dress and furniture, the same neces-
sities, if we are to live? For we are not Brahmans,
naked sages of India, forest-dwellers, exiles from life.^a
We remember that we owe gratitude to God, the 2
Lord, the Creator. We reject no fruit of His labours.
We are of course temperate—not to use His gifts to
excess or amiss. So, not without your forum, not
without your meat-market, not without your baths,
shops, factories, your inns and market-days, and the
rest of the life of buying and selling, we live with you
—in this world. We sail ships, we as well as you, and 3
along with you; we go to the wars, to the country, to
market with you. Our arts and yours work together;
our labour is openly at your service. How we can
seem unprofitable to your business, when we live with
you and our living depends on you, I do not know.

Even if I do not attend your rituals, well, I am a 4
man on that day as much as any other. I do not bathe
at dawn on the Saturnalia—I do not wish to lose both
night and day; but I do bathe at the proper and
healthful hour, which will keep my bodily heat and
my blood in order; I can be stiff and pale after my
bath when I am dead. Nor do I recline to eat in 5
public at the Liberalia, which is the habit of the
beast-fighters taking their last meal; but wherever
I dine, it is on your supplies. I do not buy a garland 6
for my head. What difference does it make to you,
how I use the flowers, if in any case I buy them? I
think them more delightful when free, untied, wander-
ing as they will. But suppose they please also when

worked up into a garland, *we* know a garland by our noses ; let them see to it who smell through their hair ! We do not gather at the games ; but the wares 7 hawked at those assemblages, if I should wish them, I shall get more freely from their proper places. We certainly don't buy incense. If the lands of Araby complain, let the Sabaeans know that their wares are lavished at a higher and dearer price on burying Christians than on fumigating gods.

“ At any rate,” you say, “ the revenues of the 8 temples are breaking down daily ; how many are they who toss their coins in there ? ” We cannot cope with both men and your gods begging together ; and do not think alms should be given to others than those who ask. Come, let Jupiter hold out his hand and receive ! In the meantime our compassion spends more street by street than your religion temple by temple. But the other revenues may be 9 grateful to Christians paying what is due with the same good faith that keeps us from cheating other men ; so that, if an inquiry were made, how much is lost to the public exchequer by the fraud and lying of your declarations, an account could easily be struck—the complaint on one side balanced by the gain in the rest of the accounts.

XLIII. I will tell you plainly, who they are who 1 may perhaps truly complain of the unprofitableness of Christians. First will come the panders, the pimps, and their agents ; next assassins, poisoners, magicians ; thirdly wizards, soothsayers, astrologers. That we 2 should be unprofitable to these is a great profit. And yet whatever loss your interests may show due to this sect, it can be balanced by a certain protection, I think. What price do you put—I do not say now,

on those who drive demons out of you—I do not say now, on those who offer prayers to the true God for you as well as for themselves, because, perhaps, you don't believe it—but on those from whom you can have nothing to fear ?

XLIV. Yet there is one loss to the State, as great 1 as it is real, and no one gives it a thought ; one injury to the common weal, and nobody computes it ; when upright men, such as we, are wasted in such numbers, in such numbers are done to death, innocent as we are. We challenge you to produce your records, 2 you who day by day preside over the trial of prisoners, who pass the sentence and clear the calendar. So many guilty persons are examined by you, with such and such crimes charged against them ; what assassin on the list, what cutpurse, what temple-robber, or bribery agent, or bath-thief, is also described as a Christian ? Or when Christians, charged as Christians, are brought into court, who among them is of the same sort as all those criminals ? It is with your kind that 3 the jail is always steaming ; with the sighs of your kind the mines always resounding ; with your kind the wild beasts are fed ; from your kind the givers of public shows always maintain their herds of the condemned. Not a Christian on that list, unless it be simply as a Christian ; or, if any further charge be entered against him, he is no Christian.

XLV. We, then, alone are innocent. What is 1 surprising in that, if it must be so ? And it must be. Innocence we have been taught by God ; in its perfection we know it, as revealed by a perfect teacher ; faithfully we keep it as committed to us by one who reads the heart and cannot be despised. It was but man's opinion that gave you your idea of 2

APOLOGETICUS, XLV. 2-7

innocence, man's authority that enjoined it. So your rule of life is neither complete nor does it inspire such fear as to lead to true innocence. Man's skill to make clear what is truly good is no more than his authority to enforce it; the one may as easily be mistaken as the other despised. And to come to the 3 point, which is the ampler saying: Thou shalt not kill, or, Do not even be angry? Which is more perfect, to forbid adultery or to prohibit a single lustful look? Which is the deeper law, to restrain from doing evil or from even speaking it? Which is the more thorough, not to permit the doing of an injury or to allow no retaliation? Though at the same time 4 you must recognize that your own laws, which seem to tend to innocence, drew from the divine law, which is the more ancient pattern. We have spoken already of the date of Moses.

But what authority can man's laws have, when a 5 man may have the luck to evade them, again and again undiscovered in his guilt, sometimes to despise them, as he breaks them of choice or of necessity? Think over all this, remembering how short is any 6 punishment that will not continue after death. That is why Epicurus makes light of all torture and pain; if it is slight, he says, you may despise it, if it is great it will not be long.^a Yes! We who are examined 7 in the sight of God who sees all, we who foresee an eternal punishment from His hand, we well may be the only ones to attain innocence; since, at once from fullness of knowledge, from the difficulty of concealment, from the greatness of the torture (not *long*, but eternal), we fear Him, whom he, too, must fear who judges us who fear—who fear God, that is, and not the proconsul.

XLVI. We have stood our ground, I think, on 1 every charge brought against us, and the demand therewith made for the blood of the Christians. We have set forth our whole position and our method of proving the case set forth—to wit, by the evidence and antiquity of the divine books, and by the confession of spiritual powers. Who will undertake to refute this case,—not by dialectic, but in the same form in which we have established our proof, on the basis of truth ?

Still, while every man recognizes our truth, mean- 2 while unbelief (convinced though it be of the goodness of our school, which experience and intercourse by now have established) counts our school no divine affair at all, but rather a variety of philosophy. “ The philosophers,” says he, “ they teach the same things, make the same professions—innocence, justice, patience, sobriety, chastity.” Then why, if, so far 3 as teaching goes, we are compared with them, why are we not put on an equality with them in freedom and impunity of teaching ? Or why, since we are all on one level, why are not they compelled to discharge those duties, our refusal of which brings us into danger ? For who compels a philosopher to sacrifice, 4 or to take an oath, or to set out silly lamps at mid-day ? Not a bit of it ! They openly destroy your gods, they attack your superstitions in their treatises, and you applaud. Yes, and many of them bark against the Emperors too, and you sustain them. You are more ready to reward them with statues and stipends than to condemn them to the beasts. Quite right too ! Philosophers is what they are called, not Christians. This name of “ philosopher ” 5 does not drive out demons. Why not, seeing that

philosophers rank demons below gods?^a It is the voice of Socrates: "if the *daemonion* permit." Socrates, again,—though he did know something of the truth and denied the gods—at the end of his life he ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Aesculapius^b —I suppose, out of compliment to Aesculapius's father; for Apollo declared Socrates to be the wisest of men. Absent-minded Apollo! He bore 6 witness to the wisdom of the man who denied the existence of gods!

The measure of the hatred that Truth sets ablaze gives the measure of his offence who believes it and maintains it. The man who corrupts Truth, who makes a false show of it, on this very score wins goodwill among the enemies of Truth. Truth? The philo- 7 sophers, in their ill-will, mock it and corrupt it; they pretend to truth; their pretending to it means its corruption; it is glory that is their real aim. But Christians are bound to seek Truth, and they offer it uncorrupted, as those needs must who think of their salvation. So we are not on a level, as you suppose, 8 either as to knowledge or way of life. Take Thales,^c first of natural philosophers; what certain word had he for Croesus who asked him about godhead,—and all those adjournments conceded to him for reflexion were in vain? But God—there is no Christian 9 working-man but finds God, shows Him, assigns to Him in actual deed all that is sought for in God; though Plato affirms that the maker of the universe

phon, ἀνδρῶν ἀπάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος; cf. Diogenes Laertius, ii. 18. 37.

^c Cf. ch. 19, the passage inserted from codex Fuldensis. Minucius Felix ch. 13 tells the story of Simonides and Hiero as does Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, i. 22. 60.

is not easy to be found, and, when found, he is hard to declare to all men.^a

But if we challenge on the ground of chastity, 10 I read a part of the Athenian sentence on Socrates, declared a corrupter of lads.^b The Christian, so far as sex is concerned, is content with the woman.^c I know the story of Phryne, the harlot, submitting to the passions of Diogenes. I am also told that one Speusippus, of Plato's school, was killed in the act of adultery. The Christian is born masculine for his 11 wife and for no other woman. Democritus blinded himself, because he could not look on women without desire, and found it pain not to be satisfied; he admitted his incontinence by his cure for it. But 12 the Christian keeps his eyes and does *not* see women; in his mind lies his blindness to lust.

If I am to make a defence as to modesty of 13 behaviour, look! there is Diogenes with muddy feet trampling the proud couches of Plato—with another pride^d; the Christian has no pride, even where the poor man is concerned. If self-restraint is the issue, why, there is Pythagoras at Thurii, and there is Zeno in Priene, aiming at tyranny; the Christian does not even aspire to be aedile. If I am to meet you on 14 the issue of the calm mind, Lycurgus wished to starve himself to death, because the Spartans had altered his laws; the Christian even when condemned to

^a What exactly Tertullian wrote here seems beyond recovery. The two French translators take different views of the meaning. The Abbé de Gourcy: "Jamais on ne reprochera à un chrétien de violer les lois de la nature;" and Waltzing: "Un chrétien ne change pas même de femme."

^d Cf. Diogenes Laertius, vi. 2. 26; Plato rejoins: *ἐτέρῳ γε τύφῳ, Διόγενες.*

death gives thanks.^a If I make the comparison on honesty, Anaxagoras refused to return the deposit to his guests; the Christian outside his group as well as inside it is called faithful.^b If I take my stand 15 on plain dealing, Aristotle shamelessly made his friend Hermias yield him place ^c; the Christian injures not even his enemy. The same Aristotle's shameful tutorship of Alexander is equivalent to flattery; Plato—no better—fawns upon Dionysius to gratify his belly. Aristippus in purple, with great affecta- 16 tion of seriousness, lives a wanton life; and Hippias ^d is killed for plotting against his city—a thing no Christian ever attempted in revenge for his friends scattered with every kind of cruelty.

But someone will say that in our case too there are 17 some who desert the rule of our teaching. Then they cease to be counted Christians among us; but those philosophers, despite deeds such as those mentioned, continue in all the name and fame of wisdom among you. But then what have philosopher and Christian 18 in common,—the disciple of Greece and the disciple of heaven,—the business of the one with reputation, of the other with salvation,—the man of words and the man of deeds,—the builder and the destroyer,—the friend and the foe of error,—the man who corrupts the truth, and the man who restores it and proclaims it—the thief of truth and its guardian?

XLVII. Truth is older than all else, if I mistake 1 v. 1. 4, of Aristotle marrying a woman from the harem of Hermeias; but what has it to do with *simplicitas*?

^d He seems to mix two men of this name, Hippias, the tyrant, son of Pisistratus, and the sophist Hippias of Elis. These scandals about the philosophers seem to lack attestation in extant literature. It looks very much as if Tertullian had Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*, ch. 2, before him.

not ; and the antiquity (already shown) of the divine literature helps me here, in making it credible that it was the storehouse for all later wisdom. And if I were not for moderating the weight of my volume, here is another line of proof on which I could digress. Who ² among the poets, who among the sophists, has not drunk from the fountain of the prophets ? From them the philosophers have slaked their thirst of mind ; with the result that what they borrow from our books sets you comparing us with them. Hence, I opine, some have driven out philosophy — the Thebans I mean, the Spartans and Argives. In ³ rivalry with our authors, and being men with a passion (as I said) for vainglory and eloquence and nothing else,—whatever they stumbled on in the sacred digests they took it, they recast it to match the plan of their fancy, turned it to their own purposes. They had not enough belief in these passages being divine to abstain from interpolation, nor enough intelligence of what at that time^a was still rather cloudy,—full of darkness, even for the Jews themselves, whose own the scriptures seemed to be. For wherever there was the simplicity of truth, there all ⁴ the more, in its scorn for faith, human fastidiousness made changes ; and as a result they involved in uncertainty what they had found definite.

They found God there ; that was all ; but they ⁵ would not speak of Him as they found Him ; so they must discuss His quality, His nature, His abode. Some are sure He is incorporeal, others that He has ⁶ a body—the Platonists, that is, and the Stoics. Others say He consists of atoms, others of numbers, as do Epicurus and the Pythagoreans. Another says, of fire,—the view of Heraclitus. The Plato-

nists represent Him as taking care of the world ; on the other hand the Epicureans picture Him as idle and unemployed, a nobody (so to say) as regards human affairs. The Stoics set Him outside the world, 7 like a potter to whirl this fabric round from outside ; the Platonists put Him inside the world, like a pilot, to stay inside of what He guides. So too about the 8 universe—they do not agree whether it is born or unborn, to depart or to remain. So too about the status of the soul, which some will have to be divine and eternal, and some subject to dissolution. Every man, as he felt, interpolated or remodelled.

But it is nothing surprising if the older literature ^a 9 is misused by these clever philosophers. Some men of their breed have corrupted this more modern literature of ours ^b with opinions of their own to match the views of the philosophers ; and from the one way have hacked out many tracks crooked and involved. I would put this forward lest the known variety within our school should seem to any man to set us on a level with the philosophers, and from the variety of defence made he should condemn the Truth. But 10 we at once lodge a demurrer against our falsifiers that that is the rule of Truth, which comes from Christ, transmitted through his companions. These various inventors of doctrines will be proved to be of a later date.

Everything against the Truth is built up from the 11 Truth, and it is the spirits of error that produce this rivalry. It is they who have produced these falsifications of wholesome doctrine ; they who have launched the fables, which by their resemblance weaken the credibility of Truth or rather capture belief for themselves. So a man may think the Christians

unworthy of belief because the poets and philosophers are unworthy of it ; or he may think that poets and philosophers deserve the more belief because they are not Christians.

So comes it that we are laughed at for proclaiming 12 that God will be judge. For just so the poets and philosophers set up a tribunal in the world below. And if we raise the threat of Gehenna, which is a treasury of hidden fire for punishment underground, in just the same way we meet with utter derision. For just so Pyriphlegethon is a river among the dead. And if we name Paradise, a place of divine beauty, 13 reserved for the reception of the spirits of the holy, kept from the knowledge of this common world by the fiery zone as it were by a wall,—the Elysian fields are before us in capturing belief. Now whence, I ask you, do the philosophers and poets find things so similar ? Whence, indeed, unless it be from our mysteries ? And if from our mysteries, which are 14 the older, then ours are truer and more credible when the mere copies of them win credence. If they invented these things out of their own feelings, then our mysteries must be counted copies of what came later—a thing contrary to nature. For the shadow never exists before the body, nor the copy before the truth.

XLVIII. Come, suppose some philosopher affirm 1 (like Laberius ^a talking of Pythagoreanism) that a mule becomes a man, and a woman a snake ; suppose that by force of eloquence he twists all the arguments to support that opinion ; it will find (won't it ?) acceptance, it will implant the conviction that we must on that account abstain from eating animals. The persuasion (is it ?) that a man must be careful

not to be eating a bit of his great-grandfather in his beef? But supposing a Christian assures you that from a man a man comes, and from Gaius it is Gaius himself that returns,—won't the people drive him out with stones rather, and not with . . .

If there is any reason to suppose the return of souls ² into bodies, why should they not return into the same substance, when restoration means that a thing is what before it had been? But they are not now what they were,—because they could not become what they were not before, unless they ceased to be what they had been. Much reference to books would be needed, and leisure, if we wished to play with the ³ fancy as to the various beasts into which various people might seem to be re-made. But rather, to stick to our defence, it is our proposition that it is altogether more worthy of belief that what was a man will come back a man—any given person from any given person—human at all events—so that the same quality of soul should be restored to the same condition, if not also to the same likeness. Certainly, ⁴ since the reason for restoration is preparation for judgement,

Tertullian's occasional fancy for intricate antithesis. The variant may be rendered: "As if the reason, whatever it is, that justifies the return of souls into bodies, does not require that the souls should be recalled to the same bodies! Because to be recalled means to be what they were before. But if they are not what they were before, that is, clad with a human body, and the same body, the souls will not be what they were before. Then, if they are not what they were before, how shall they be said to have returned? Either they will have been made something different and will not be the same, or they will remain the same and will not re-appear from other bodies."

³ *locis* is an emendation here which Kellner adopts—"many a jest would be needed." Perhaps *locis* means passages from writers.

it must necessarily be the very same man, who once was, that will be produced, so as to receive judgement from God upon the good he has done or the opposite. Accordingly their bodies, too, will be re-fashioned, because the soul by itself alone cannot suffer anything without some solid matter, that is the flesh; and because, whatever souls deserve in the judgement of God to suffer, they did not earn it without the flesh, clothed with which they committed all their acts.

“ But how,” you say, “ how can the material of the 5 body, once distributed, be visibly produced ? ” Think of yourself, sir, and you will find assurance of it. Reflect what you were, before you were *you*. Nothing at all, wasn't it ? For you would remember, if you had existed. You were nothing before you came into being ; you become nothing when you have ceased to be ; why could you not again come out of nothing into being, by the will of the very same Author whose will brought you into being out of nothing ? What will be new about it in your experi- 6 ence ? You were not ; you were made ; and once again when you are not, you will be made. Give, if you can, an account of how you were made, and then ask how you will be made. And yet, I would think, it will be easier for you to be made what you once were, because, with no difficulty at all, you were just as much made what once you were not.

Your doubts, I suppose, will be about the power 7 of God ? of God, who set together the mighty frame of this universe out of what was not, as if out of the deadness of emptiness and chaos, who gave it the breath of life by that spirit, which gives life to all lives (souls), who sealed it to be itself a testimony for you, a type of human resurrection. Day by day 8

light is slain and shines once more ; darkness in due turn departs and follows on again ; and the dead stars come to life ; seasons, when they end, begin anew ; crops are matured and return ; assuredly the seed must be wasted and dissolved to grow more fruitfully ; everything is saved by being lost ; everything is re-fashioned out of death. You, O man! (mighty 9 name !) if you understand yourself (if you will " learn yourself," as the inscription of the Delphic priestess bids), will you, the lord of all things that die and rise again, will *you* die to perish utterly ? Wherever you have been dissolved,—whatever material body shall have destroyed you, consumed you, abolished you, reduced you to nothing, it shall restore you. To Him belongs that very *nothing*, Whose is the whole.

"Then," do you say ? " will it always be dying 10 and rising again ? " If the Lord of all things had so determined you would have perforce to submit to the law that governed your being. But, as it is, He has so determined, as He has proclaimed to us. His Reason made this universe of things diverse,^a that 11 all things should consist of a unity made of rival natures, such as void and solid, animate and inanimate, tangible and intangible, light and darkness, yes ! of life and death, too. The same Reason made a unity of Time also, mapping out and distinguishing the terms of its course, so that this first part of it from the beginning of the world, the part of our habitation, should flow on age by age to an end, but the later part of it, to which we look forward, should stretch out to an endless eternity.

When, then, the end, that border-line that gapes 12 between,^b shall have come, and the fashion of the universe itself, temporal as all other things, hung

like a curtain before that eternal dispensation, shall pass away, then shall all mankind be restored, for the determination of what good or evil it has done in this age, and for its requital, in strict accord, throughout the boundless continuance of eternity. So it 13 is not death now, and then resurrection after resurrection. We shall be the same persons that now we are, and not others in succession,—the worshippers of God, we shall ever be with God, clothed upon^a with the nature proper to eternity ; but the profane, and those who are not right with God, shall be punished with fire as lasting, and from its nature they too, as God ordains, shall derive incorruptibility.

The philosophers know the distinction between 14 mysterious and common fire. The fire that serves man's use is one thing ; the fire that ministers to the judgement of God is another, whether flashing the thunder-bolts from heaven, or rushing up from the earth through the mountain-tops. For it does not consume what it burns, but, even while it spends it, repairs the loss. So the mountains remain, ever 15 burning ; and he who is touched by fire from heaven, is safe—no fire shall turn him to ashes.^b Take this as evidence for fire eternal, this as a type of endless judgement with punishment ever renewing. The mountains burn and endure. What of the guilty, what of God's enemies ?

XLIX. All this you call presumption in our case, but 1 only in our case ; in the case of philosophers and poets it is supreme knowledge, it is unique genius ! They are wise, we are silly ; honour is their due ; mockery is ours, yes, and punishment into the bargain. But 2 now suppose what protects us to be false, and really presumption ; still it is necessary : silly—but useful !

since those who believe in it are driven to be better men, by fear of eternal punishment, by hope of eternal refreshment. So it is in no one's interest that tenets should be called false or judged silly, which it is in the interests of all to be presumed true. What is beneficial cannot be condemned on any grounds. It is with you that the presumption lies, in condemning 3 what is useful. In the same way, neither can these tenets be silly. At all events, even if they are false and silly, they are harmful to no one. For they are just like many other tenets on which you lay no penalties, vain tenets, sheer fable, but exempt from accusation and punishment, because harmless. In error of this 4 sort, if there is to be sentence passed, the fit sentence is laughter—not sword and fire, not cross and beast ! And it is in savagery and injustice of that sort that this blind rabble exults and triumphs over us—and not they alone, but some among you, who make use of this injustice to win the favour of the rabble, boast of it.

As if all your power against us were not in our 5 control ! I am a Christian certainly,—but if I wish to be. Then only can you condemn me, if I wish to be condemned. When then your power against me is, unless I so will, no power at all, your power depends on my will, not on power in you. Similarly the joy of 6 the rabble in our persecution is not a real joy ; the joy they count theirs, is ours, who prefer to be condemned rather than to fall from God. On the other hand those who hate us ought to be sorry, not glad, when we have achieved what we have chosen.

L. "Then," you say, "why complain that we perse- 1 cute you, if you wish to suffer ? You ought to love those who secure that you suffer what you wish !" Certainly

APOLOGETICUS, L. 1-6

we wish to suffer ; but it is exactly the case of the soldier and war. Nobody is glad to face it with all its inevitable anxiety and danger. Yet he battles with ² all his might and, victorious in the battle, he rejoices, —though but now he was grumbling about the battle —because he achieves glory and spoil. Our battle consists in being challenged to face the tribunals ; that there, in peril of life, we may fight it out for truth. Victory is the achievement of the thing for which you have fought. Our victory means the glory of pleasing God, and the spoils are eternal life.

But we are condemned. Yes, when we have ³ achieved our purpose. So we have conquered, when we are killed ; we escape when we are condemned. So you may now call us “ faggot-fellows ” and “ half-axle-men,” because we are tied to a half-axle-post, the faggots are piled round us, and we are burnt. This is our garb of victory, the robe embroidered with the palm ; this our triumphal chariot.^a It is ⁴ right and reasonable that we do not please the conquered ; that is why we pass for desperate fellows, a forlorn hope. But desperation and recklessness of this sort, when it is on your side, when glory and renown are at stake,—oh ! then it is holding high the standard of courage.

Mucius ^b gladly left his right hand upon the altar ; ⁵ O the sublimity of that spirit ! Empedocles gave the whole of himself to the flames of Etna, at Catana ; O the strength of that mind ! There was a foundress of Carthage who gave herself to the funeral pyre in wedlock ^c ; O the glory of that chastity ! Regulus ^b ⁶ refused to have his own single life spared in exchange for many of the enemy and suffered torture all over his body ^c ; O heroic soul, a prisoner but a conqueror !

APOLOGETICUS, I. 6-11

Anaxarchus, when they pounded him like barley groats with a pestle, "Pound away!" he cried, "pound away! it is Anaxarchus's outside case you are pounding, not Anaxarchus!"^a O the splendid spirit of the philosopher, jesting about his own death, and such a death! I pass over those who with their own swords, or some 7 milder form of death, have bargained for praise. For look! contests^b in torture win crowns from you. The 8 Attic harlot, when the torturer was tired out, at last chewed off her own tongue and spat it in the face of the raging tyrant—so to say, to spit out her voice, so that she could not now betray the conspirators, even if overcome by pain she had wished to do it.^c Zeno of Elea, when Dionysius^d asked him what philosophy 9 gave a man and he answered "contempt for death," was subjected to the lashes of the tyrant and proved his dogma by dying impassive. Assuredly the lashes of the Spartans, laid on with utmost cruelty under the eyes of a boy's kinsfolk, who cheer as they watch, win for his house the fame of endurance in exact ratio to the blood shed.^e

O that indeed is glory, lawful glory because 10 human! There no reckless presumption, no desperate delusion, is to be thought of, in that contempt for death and for every cruelty! No, there it is permissible to suffer for one's country, for the empire, for friendship, what it is not permitted to suffer—for God! And yet for every man of them you cast a 11 statue, you paint a picture, you carve an inscription, to give them immortality. So far as you can manage it with monuments, you yourselves give

at Sparta see Pausanias, iii. 16. 10. Cicero records (*Tuscul. Disput.* ii. 14. 34) that it was said some lads had died without a sound under the scourge at the altar.

APOLOGETICUS, L. 11-16

dead men a sort of resurrection. But the man who hopes for a real resurrection from God, if he suffers for God—he is a mere fool!

But go to it! my good magistrates; the populace 12 will count you a deal better, if you sacrifice the Christians to them. Torture us, rack us, condemn us, crush us; your cruelty only proves our innocence. That is why God suffers us to suffer all this. Yes, but lately, when you condemned a Christian girl to the pander rather than the panther, you admitted that we count an injury to our chastity more awful than any penalty, than any death. But nothing what- 13 ever is accomplished by your cruelties, each more exquisite than the last. It is the bait that wins men for our school. We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed. Many 14 among you preach the endurance of pain and of death—such as Cicero in his *Tusculans*, Seneca in his *Fortuita*, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Callinicus. And yet their words never find so many disciples as the Christians win, who teach by deeds. That very “obstinacy” 15 with which you taunt us, is your teacher. For who that beholds it is not stirred to inquire, what lies indeed within it? Who, on inquiry, does not join us, and joining us, does not wish to suffer, that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God, that he may win full pardon from God by paying his own blood for it? For all sins are forgiven to a deed like this. That 16 is why, on being sentenced by you, on the instant we render you thanks. There is a rivalry between God’s ways and man’s; we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by God.^a

sequitur.” Cf. *Scorpiace*, 8 “nemo voluisset occidi nisi compos veritatis.”