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THE TRINITY

Chapter 1

THE RULE OF TRUTH¹ requires that we believe, first in God the Father and almighty Lord, the most perfect Creator of all things. He suspended the heavens above in their lofty height,² made firm the earth with the heavy mass under it, poured forth the freely flowing water of the seas;³ and He arranged all these, in full abundance and order, with appropriate and suitable appurtenances.⁴ (2) In the firmament of heaven He summoned forth the light of the rising sun. He filled the candescent sphere of the moon with its monthly waxings to relieve the darkness.⁵ He also illuminated the rays of the stars with varying flashes of twinkling light. He willed that all these things in their lawfully regulated orbits⁶ encircle the entire earth's surface to form days, months, years, seasons, signs, and other things useful for mankind. (3) On earth He lifted up the highest mountains to a peak, threw down the valleys into the lowlands, leveled the plains, and created the different kinds of animals for the various needs of man. (4) He also hardened the sturdy trees of the forests to serve man's needs, brought forth the fruits of the earth for food, opened the

1 The original title of the treatise is unknown. The correct title seems to have been *De regula veritatis* (*The Rule of Truth*) or *De regula fidei* (*The Rule of Faith*). Novatian makes it clear that his purpose in writing was "to explain briefly the Rule of Faith" (ch. 21). He never uses the word "Trinity." The Trinitarian controversies which took place between the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople probably inspired an amanuensis to alter the original title.

2 Cf. Gen. 1.6.

3 Cf. Gen. 1.9-10.

4 Cf. Gen. 1.14-18; 1 Cor. 15.41. Novatian's admiration of creation betrays Stoic influence.

5 Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem* 29; Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.270.

6 Cf. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 1.4,6; Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem* 2.3.

mouths of springs, and poured them into the flowing rivers.⁷ (5) After these things, lest He should have failed to provide our eyes with beautiful objects, He clothed all things with the various colors of flowers to delight all those who look upon them. (6) Although the sea was wonderful both in its extent and for its usefulness, yet in it also He fashioned many kinds of living creatures, both small and large,⁸ which show the intelligence of the Creator by the variety of His creation. (7) Not content with all this, lest the rushing and the flowing of the waters occupy territory not its own with loss to its human possessor, He enclosed its limits with shores, so that when the roaring waves and the foaming surge would come forth from the sea's bosom, they would return into themselves and would not pass beyond the limits allowed them.⁹ They would obey their prescribed laws, in order that man would more readily keep God's laws, seeing that even the elements themselves obey them.

(8) After all these things had been accomplished, He placed man at the head of the world—man made to the image of God,¹⁰ endowed with intelligence, discernment, and prudence so that he could imitate God. Although the primordial elements of his body were earthly, nevertheless the substance was infused by a heavenly and divine breath.¹¹ (9) When God gave him all these things for his service, He willed that man alone should be free.¹² Nevertheless, lest man's unrestrained freedom prove dangerous, God imposed a command in which He stated that indeed evil was not in the fruit of the tree,¹³ but warned that evil would follow if, in the use of his free will, man disregarded the command laid down.¹⁴ (10) On the one hand, man ought to be free lest the image of God serve in unbecoming manner.

7 Cf. Ps. 103(104).10.

8 Cf. Ps. 103(104).25.

9 Cf. Ps. 103(104).9.

10 Cf. Gen. 1.26-27.

11 Cf. Gen. 2.7.

12 Cf. Gen. 1.28.

13 Cf. Gen. 2.17; Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autol.* 2.25.

14 Cf. Plato, *The Republic* 10.617E: "The blame is his who chooses: God is blameless," quoted by Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.44 (tr. by T. B. Falls, FC 6.81). Cf. also Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 2.4, 6, 7, and Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.27.

On the other hand, a law had to be imposed that unrestrained liberty might not break forth even to contempt for its Giver. Hence, man might receive either merited rewards or due punishments as the result of his actions, recognizing these actions as his own doings, because it was in his power to act, through the movement of his mind in the one or the other direction.¹⁵ (11) Whence, indeed, hated mortality comes back upon him.¹⁶ He could have avoided mortality by obedience, but he subjected himself to it by his headlong and perverse determination to be God.¹⁷ (12) Nevertheless, God mercifully mitigated his punishment by cursing not so much man as his labors on earth.¹⁸ The fact that God searches for him does not proceed from any ignorance on the part of God¹⁹ but it manifests man's hope of a future discovery and salvation in Christ.²⁰ Furthermore, that man was prevented from touching the wood of the tree of life²¹ did not spring from the malicious ill-will of envy but from a fear that man, living forever, would always bear about with him for his punishment an abiding guilt,²² had not Christ previously pardoned his sins.

(13) In the higher regions—those above the very firmament itself, which at present are beyond our sight—He previously called the angels into being, arranged the spiritual powers, set over them the Thrones and Powers, created many other measureless spaces of heavens and mysterious works without limit. Therefore, even this measureless universe seems to be the latest of God's material creations rather than His only work. (14) Even the regions that lie beneath the earth are not without their ruling powers duly appointed and set out. For there is a place to which are taken the souls of the just and the unjust, already aware of the sentence awaiting them

15 Cf. 2 Cor. 5.10.

16 Cf. Wisd. 2.24 (?). Novatian means envy on the part of God; he is combating heresy (cf. Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.25).

17 Cf. Gen. 3.5.

18 Cf. Gen. 3.17.

19 Cf. Gen. 3.9; Luke 19.10; Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.26; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 2.25.

20 Cf. Rom. 8.19-21.

21 Cf. Gen. 2.17.

22 Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haereses* 3.23.6; Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.26.

at the future judgment. We see, therefore, that the vast works of God, exuberant on all sides, are not shut up within the confines of this world spacious to the utmost as we have said; but we can also contemplate them beneath both the depths and the heights of the world itself. Thus, after having considered the greatness of His works, we can fittingly admire the Maker of such a mighty mass.²³

Chapter 2

Over all these things is God Himself, who contains all things and who leaves nothing devoid of Himself; He has left no room for a superior god¹ as some think. Since He Himself has enclosed all things in the bosom of His perfect greatness and power, He is always intent on His own work and pervades all things, moves all things, gives life to all things, and observes all things.² He binds together the discordant materials of all the elements into such harmony³ that out of these dissimilar elements, there exists a unique world so compacted by this consolidated harmony that no force can dissolve it, save when He alone who created it orders it to be dissolved in order to grant us greater blessings.⁴ (2) We read that He contains all things;⁵ therefore nothing could have existed outside of Him. For indeed He who has no beginning whatsoever, must necessarily experience no end, unless—far be the thought from us—He began to exist at a certain time and is therefore not above all things. But if He began to exist after something else, He would be inferior to that previously existing thing; hence He would be found to be of lesser power, since designated as subsequent even in time itself. (3) For this reason, therefore, He is always infinite because there is nothing greater than

23 Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 1.33.

1 That is, the God of Marcion; cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.15.

2 Novatian describes here the cosmic function of God the Creator and Organizer of the world.

3 Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.25. We have here the theory of “*contraires complémentaires*” which was also attributed in general to the Stoics (Spanneut, *op. cit.* [Intr. to *The Trinity* n. 5] 379, 412-13).

4 Cf. 2 Peter 3.10-12; Rev. 21.1.

5 Cf. Wisd. 1.7 (?); Isa. 40.22 (?).

He, ever eternal, because nothing is more ancient than He. In fact, that which is without a beginning can be preceded by nothing, because it lacks time. Therefore He is immortal, for He does not pass away to a consummate end. And since whatever is without a beginning is without a law, He excludes the restrictions of time because He feels Himself a debtor to no one.

(4) Concerning Him, therefore, and concerning those things which are of Him and in Him, the mind of man cannot fittingly conceive what they are, how great they are, and of what their nature; nor has human eloquence the power to express His greatness. (5) For all eloquence is certainly dumb and every mind is inadequate to conceive and to utter His greatness.⁶ In fact, He is greater than the mind itself, so that His greatness is inconceivable; for if He could be conceived, He would be less than the human mind which could conceive Him. He is also greater than all speech, so that He cannot be expressed; for if He could be expressed, He would be less than human speech, which through expressing Him would then comprehend and contain Him. (6) Whatever can be thought about Him is less than He; whatever can be uttered about Him will be less than He when compared with Him. When we are silent we can experience Him to some extent, but we cannot express Him in words as He really is. (7) If, for instance, you should speak of Him as light,⁷ you would be speaking of a created thing of His, not of Him, you would not express what He is. If you should speak of Him as power, you would be speaking of and bringing out His might rather than Himself. If you should speak of Him as majesty, you would be describing His honor rather than Him. (8) But why am I making a protracted affair of this matter by running through His attributes one by one? Once and for all I will sum up everything: whatever you might affirm about Him would be expressing some possession or power of His rather than God Himself. (9) For what can you fittingly say or think about Him who is above all speech and thought? There is only

6 Novatian's description of God's transcendental attributes reveals Neoplatonic and Platonic influence.

7 Cf. Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 1.3.

one thing that can fittingly be said or thought about Him who is above all speech and thought: namely, that—within our power, our grasp, our understanding—there is only one way in which we may mentally conceive what God is—viz., by realizing that He is that Being of whose nature and greatness there is no possible understanding, nor even any possibility of thinking.⁸ (10) If the keen sight of our eyes grows dim by looking at the sun so that their gaze, overpowered by the bright rays that meet it, cannot look at the orb itself, our mental vision undergoes this very same thing in its every thought of God. The more it endeavors to contemplate God, the more is it blinded by the light of its own thought. (11) In fact, what (to repeat once more) can you worthily say about Him, who is more sublime than all sublimity, loftier than all loftiness, more profound than all profundity, brighter than all light, more brilliant than all brilliance, more splendid than all splendor, mightier than all might, more powerful than all power, more beautiful than all beauty, truer than all truth, stronger than all strength, greater than all majesty, more potent than all potency, richer than all riches, and more prudent than all prudence, and kinder than all kindness, better than all goodness, more just than all justice, more clement than all clemency? (12) Every kind of virtue must of necessity be less than He who is the God and Author of them all, so that it can really be said that God is that which is of such a nature that nothing can be compared to him. For He is above everything that can be said of Him. He is, so to speak, an intelligent Being who without any beginning or ending in time engenders and fills all things and governs, for the good of all, with supreme and perfect reason, the causes of things naturally linked together.

Chapter 3

We acknowledge, therefore, and know that He is God, the Creator¹ of all things; their Lord, because of His power; their

⁸ It almost sounds like Plotinus discussing God's ineffable immensity.

¹ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 8.313.

Author, because of creation. "He," I say, "spoke and all things were made; He commanded, and all things came forth."² Of Him it is written: "You have made all things in wisdom."³ Moses says of Him: "God is in heaven above and on earth below,"⁴ and according to Isaiah, "He has measured the heavens with a span, the earth with the width of the fist,"⁵ who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble,⁶ who holds the orb of the earth and those who live on it as if they were locusts;⁷ who weighed the mountains on scales and the groves on a balance,⁸ by the exact precision of the divine plan. And He laid out this weight of the earth's mass with precise equipoise, lest the huge ill-balanced mass should easily fall to ruin, if it were not balanced with proportionate weights.⁹ It is He who says through the prophet: "I am God, and there is none beside Me."¹⁰ He says by means of the same prophet: "I will not give My majesty to another,"¹¹ so that He might exclude all heathens and heretics with their images, proving that he is not God who is made by the hand of an artificer;¹² nor is he God whom heretical ingenuity,¹³ has devised. For he is not God whose existence requires an artificer. (3) Again, He says through the prophet: "Heaven is My throne, earth the footstool under My feet: what sort of home will you build for Me, or what is the place of My rest?"¹⁴—this to make it clear that since the world cannot contain Him, much less can a temple enclose Him. God says these things for our instruction, not to boast of Himself. Nor does He seek from us glory for His own greatness; rather, as a Father, He

² Ps. 148.5.

³ Ps. 103(104).24.

⁴ Deut. 4.39.

⁵ Isa. 40.12.

⁶ Ps. 103(104).32.

⁷ Isa. 40.22.

⁸ Isa. 40.12.

⁹ Ps. 103(104).5.

¹⁰ Isa. 45.21-22; cf. 18.

¹¹ Isa. 42.8; 48.11.

¹² Hosea 8.6; Acts 19.26.

¹³ Tertullian (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 40) also places idolaters and heretics in the same category.

¹⁴ Isa. 66.1.

desires to bestow on us God-fearing wisdom. (4) He desires, moreover, to attract our minds, so cruel, so proud, and so obstinate in their rude ferocity, to gentleness;¹⁵ hence He says: "And upon whom shall My spirit rest but upon him who is humble and peaceful, and trembles at my words?"¹⁶ Thus man may know, to some extent, how great God is, while he learns to fear Him through the spirit given to him. (5) Ever desiring to become more completely known to us and to incite our minds to His worship, He said: "I am the Lord who made the light and created the darkness,"¹⁷ that we may not think that a certain "nature"—I know not what—was the artificer¹⁸ of those alternations whereby the nights and days are regulated; but rather, and with greater truth, we may acknowledge God as their Creator. (6) Since we cannot see Him with the sight of our eyes, we learn to know Him from the greatness, the power, and the majesty of His works. "For since the creation of the world," says the Apostle, "His invisible attributes are clearly seen—His everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made."¹⁹ Thus the human mind, learning to know the hidden things from those which are manifest, may consider in spirit the greatness of the Maker from the greatness of His works which it sees with the eyes of the mind.²⁰ (7) The same Apostle says of Him: "To the King of the ages; who is immortal, invisible, the one only God, be honor and glory."²¹ He who has surpassed the greatness of thought has passed beyond the contemplation of our eyes; for, he says, "from Him and through Him and in Him are all things."²² All

15 The concept of advancing from *feritas* to *humanitas* is frequent in classical Latin; cf. Lucretius 5.927; Cicero, *De officiis* 3.6.32.

16 Isa. 66.2.

17 Isa. 45.6-7.

18 Cf. the pantheistic view of Nature, held especially by the Stoics, in Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.36.100. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, stated that Nature was, with regard to the universe, "non artificiosa solum, sed plane artifex" (*ibid.* 2.22.58).

19 Rom. 1.20.

20 Cf. Tertullian, *De anima* 18.

21 1 Tim. 1.17.

22 Rom. 11.36.

things exist by His command, so that they are "from Him"; they are set in order by His word and are therefore "through Him." Finally, all things have recourse to His judgment so that, while they long for freedom "in Him," after corruption has been done away with, they appear to be recalled "to Him."

Chapter 4

The Lord rightly declares that God alone is good,¹ of whose goodness the whole world is a witness. He would not have created it if He were not good. For if "all things were very good,"² it logically follows that not only do those things which were created good prove the Creator is good, but they also prove that those things which owe their origin to a good creator cannot be other than good themselves. All evil, therefore, is a departure from God. (2) It is impossible that He who claims for Himself the title of perfect Father and Judge would be the instigator or author of any form of evil, precisely because He is the Judge and the Avenger of every evil deed. Man encounters evil only by his departure from the good God. (3) This very departure is blameworthy in man, not because it was necessary but because man himself willed it. Hence it was made clear to us not only what evil was but also from whom evil had taken its origin, lest there should seem to be envy in God.

(4) He is always, therefore, equal to Himself; He never changes³ or transforms Himself into other forms, lest through change He should appear to be also mortal. For the modification implied in change from one thing to another involves a share in death of some sort. Therefore there is never any addition of parts or of glory in Him, lest anything should seem to have ever been wanting to the perfect one. Nor can there be any question of diminution in Him, for that would imply that some degree of mortality is in Him. On the contrary, what He is, He always is; who He is He always is; such as He is, He always is. (5) For increase in growth indicates a beginning; whereas any wasting away evidences death and destruction.

1 Cf. Luke 18.19

2 Gen. 1.31.

3 James 1.17.

And therefore He says: "I am God, and have not changed."⁴ He always retains His manner of Being, because what is not born is not subject to change. (6) For—whatever that Being may be that is God⁵—this must always be true of Him, that He always is God, preserving Himself by His own powers. And therefore He says: "I am who am."⁶ That which is has this name because it always preserves its same manner of being. Change takes away the name, "That which is"; for whatever changes at all is shown to be mortal by the very fact that it changes. It ceases to be what it was and consequently begins to be what it was not. (7) Of necessity, then, God always retains His manner of being, because He is always like unto Himself, always equal to Himself without any loss arising from change. For that which is not born cannot change, since only those things undergo change which are made or which are begotten; whereas things which at one time were not, experience existence by coming into being, and by coming into being they undergo change. On the contrary, things which have neither birth nor maker are exempt from change because they have not a beginning, the cause of change.

(8) And so God is said to be also unique since He has no equal. For God (whatever that Being may be that is God) must necessarily be supreme. Now whatever is supreme must be supreme in such wise that an equal is excluded. Therefore He must be the one and only Being with whom nothing can be compared, because He has no equal. (9) As the very nature of things demands, there cannot be two infinities. That alone is infinite which has absolutely neither beginning nor end; for whatever occupies the whole excludes the beginning of another. If the infinite does not contain all that exists (whatever it be), then it will find itself within that which contains it and therefore it will be less than the containing element. Hence it will cease to be God, since it has been brought under the dominion of

⁴ Mal. 3.6.

⁵ Novatian uses the expression *quod est deus* (frequent in Hilary) for the abstract *deitas*, which word is not found prior to Arnobius and Augustine.

⁶ Exod. 3.14.

another whose magnitude will include it because it is the smaller. As a result what contained it would itself claim to be God.

(10) It results from this that God's own name is ineffable because it cannot even be conceived. The name of a thing connotes whatever comes under the demands of its nature. For a name is significant of the reality which could be grasped from the name. However, when it is a question of something of such a nature that not even the intellectual powers themselves can form a proper concept, then how will it be expressed fittingly by a single word of designation, for it so exceeds the intellect that it is necessarily beyond the comprehension of any name? (11) When God takes for Himself a name or manifests it for certain reasons and on certain occasions, we know that it is not so much the real nature of the name that has been made known to us as a vague symbol appointed for our use, to which men may have recourse and find that they can appeal to God's mercy through it.

(12) God is, therefore, immortal and incorruptible, experiencing neither diminution nor end of any sort. Because He is incorruptible, He is also immortal, and because He is immortal, He is therefore also incorruptible. Both attributes are reciprocally linked together between and in themselves by a mutual relationship. Thus are they brought by the ensuing union to the condition of eternity: immortality proceeding from incorruptibility and incorruptibility coming from immortality.

Chapter 5

If in Scripture we consider instances of His legitimate wrath and descriptions of His anger and learn of the instances recorded of His hatred, we are not to regard these things asserted of Him as examples of human vices.¹ (2) Although all these things can corrupt man, they cannot vitiate the divine power in any way. Passions such as these are rightly said to exist in man but would wrongly be declared to exist in God. Man can be corrupted by them be-

¹ Cf. Gregory of Elvira, *Tractatus Origenis* 1, lines 290-332, esp. 318-22 (ed. Bulhart, CCL 69.11-12). Novatian's text is quoted at least nine times in these homilies, the work of the Spanish writer Gregory (d. after 392) even though passing under the name of Origen.

cause he is capable of corruption; God cannot be corrupted by them because He is not capable of corruption. (3) Therefore they have a power of their own which they can exercise only where they find passible matter, not where they find an impassible substance. (4) The fact also that God is angry does not arise from any vice in Him; rather He acts thus for our benefit. He is merciful even when He threatens, because by these threats men are recalled to the right path. Fear is necessary for those who lack an incentive to good living, so that they who have rejected reason may at least be moved by terror. And so all these instances of anger, hatred, and the like, on God's part, are revealed, as the truth of the matter shows, for our healing and arise from deliberate purpose, neither from vice (5) nor from weakness. Therefore they do not have the power to corrupt God. The different elements of which we are made are wont to arouse in us the discord of anger which corrupts us; but this diversity of elements cannot exist in God either by nature or from vice, because He cannot conceivably be made up of a union of corporeal parts. (6) He is simple, without any corporeal admixture—whatever be the total of the being that only He Himself knows—since He is called spirit.² Thus those things which are faulty and the cause of corruption in man, inasmuch as they arise from the corruptibility of his body and matter itself, cannot exercise their power of corruptibility in God. As we have already said, they did indeed spring not from any vice in Him but from reason.

Chapter 6

Although heavenly Scripture frequently changes the divine countenance to human form when it says: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just";¹ or "The Lord God smelled the scent of a good fragrance"² or "tables written with the finger of God"³ are given to

2 John 4.24.

1 Ps. 33(34).16.

2 Gen. 8.21.

3 Exod. 31.18.

Moses; or the children of Israel are delivered from the land of Egypt "with a mighty hand and uplifted arm."⁴ Again Scripture asserts: "The mouth of the Lord has spoken these things";⁵ or when the earth is considered "the footstool of God";⁶ or when it says: "Incline your ear, and hear."⁷ We who say "that the law is spiritual"⁸ do not confine the measure or form of the Divine Majesty within these outlines of our own bodily frame. On the contrary, we extend it infinitely over the field, if I may use the expression, of its own illimitable greatness. (2) For it is written: "If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I descend into hell, You are present; and if I take my wings and depart across the sea, there shall Your hand take hold of me, and Your right hand hold me fast."⁹ We know the meaning of Holy Scripture from the unfolding of the Divine Dispensation. The prophet, at that time, was still speaking about God in parables according to the faith of the times,¹⁰ not as God really was, but as the people were able to comprehend Him. The use of such language to describe God must be attributed to the people, not to God.¹¹ (3) Thus the people were permitted to erect the tabernacle, although God cannot be contained within a tabernacle. The temple was constructed, although God cannot possibly be enclosed within the narrow limits of a temple. God is not finite, but the people's faculty of perceiving is finite. God is not straitened, but rather the understanding of people's minds is straitened. (4) Accordingly, Our Lord said in the Gospel: "The hour shall come, when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father," and He gave the reason: "God is spirit, and therefore they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."¹² (5) Thus it is

4 Ps. 135(136).12; Deut. 5.15.

5 Isa. 1.20.

6 Isa. 66.1.

7 4 Kings (2 Kings) 19.16.

8 Rom. 7.14.

9 Ps. 138(139).8-10.

10 The language of the prophets was parabolic, adapted to the understanding of the people, which was finite.

11 The people, not God, must be held accountable for the application of such anthropomorphic language to God.

12 John 4.21, 24.

the divine powers that are represented there by means of bodily members, and neither any external appearance nor bodily features of God are set before us. When eyes are ascribed to God, it is implied that He sees all things;¹³ an ear, to show that He hears all things;¹⁴ a finger,¹⁵ to reveal a certain signification of the will; nostrils, to show that He is aware of our prayers as one is of odors;¹⁶ hands,¹⁷ to prove that He is the Author of every created thing; an arm,¹⁸ to make it known that no nature can resist His power; and finally feet,¹⁹ to make it clear that He fills all things, and that there is no thing in which God is not. (6) He does not have members, nor are the functions of members necessary to Him at whose will alone, even though it be unexpressed, all things serve and are present.²⁰ Why should He, who is light, have need of eyes? Why should He, who is everywhere, seek to procure feet? Why would He want to walk, when He can go nowhere outside Himself? Why should He desire hands, whose silent Will is the artificer of all things to be created? Nor does He, who knows even our secret wishes, have need of ears. Why should He need a tongue, whose very thought is a command? (7) These members were necessary to men, not to God, because man's purpose would have been ineffective if the body did not execute his thought. They are not necessary to God, whose works not only immediately follow His Will without any effort, but even proceed simultaneously with His Will. (8) Moreover, He is all eye because there is not a part of Him that does not see; all ear, because there is not a part of Him that does not hear; all hand, because there is not a part of Him that is not operative; all foot, because He is everywhere in His entirety. Likewise, the entirety of His being, whatever it may be, which contains no differentiation of parts, is everywhere in its entirety. (9) For whatever is simple does not admit of diversity within itself. Only those things

13 Cf. Ps. 33(34).16.

14 Cf. 4 Kings (2 Kings) 19.16.

15 Cf. Exod. 31.18.

16 Cf. Gen. 8.21.

17 Cf. Ps. 135(136).12; Deut. 5.15.

18 Cf. *ibid.*

19 Cf. Isa. 66.1.

20 Cf. Ps. 118(119).91.

which proceed from birth to dissolution are resolved into diversity of members. Those things which are not composite cannot experience this; for what is immortal, whatever it is, must be one, simple, and eternal. Since it is one, it cannot be dissolved because it lies outside the law of dissolution, and it is not subject to the law of death.

Chapter 7

When Our Lord affirms that God is spirit¹ I think that Christ spoke thus about the Father because He wanted to imply that something more is to be understood than merely that God is spirit. Although He reasons with men in His Gospel in order to better their understanding, nevertheless, even He speaks to men about God only in a manner that they can perceive or grasp at the time. As we have said, He endeavors to broaden their religious conceptions and bring them to an acknowledgment of God. (2) We find it has been written that "God" is called "love";² however, it does not follow from this that the substance of God is expressed in the term love. Again, because He is called "light,"³ it does not follow that the substance of God is contained in this expression. But all this is said of God because that is all that can be expressed in words. Therefore, when He is called spirit, one does not state all that He really is; He is so called in order that man's mind may progress through a better understanding even to the concept of spirit. After the mind itself has undergone a change in spirit, it may be able through the Spirit to conclude that God is something more [than mere spirit]⁴ (3) What He is⁵ (insofar as His true essence is concerned) cannot be expressed by human speech, nor perceived by human ears, nor grasped by human senses. "If neither eye has seen nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man nor his very mind perceived the things which God has

1 Cf. John 4.24.

2 1 John 4.8.

3 1 John 1.5.

4 Cf. 2 Cor. 3.15-18. Novatian is endeavoring to demonstrate the absolute immateriality of God.

5 Cf. Exod. 3.14.

prepared for them that love Him,"⁶ what must He be, and how great must He be who promises these things which the mind and the nature of man fail to comprehend? (4) Furthermore, if you take spirit to be the substance of God, you make God a created thing because every spirit is a created thing. Therefore it would follow that God was made. Likewise, if you claim according to Moses that God is fire,⁷ in saying that He is a creature, you have already described something created; and you have not pointed out that He is its Creator. (5) These expressions are used figuratively, rather than literally. For in the Old Testament, God is called fire to strike fear in the hearts of a sinful people by appearing as their Judge; whereas in the New Testament He is revealed as a spirit, that the Renewer and Creator of those who are dead in their sins⁸ may be acknowledged by the goodness of His mercy granted to those who believe.

Chapter 8

Therefore this is the God whom the Church, rejecting as she does the fables and the fancies of the heretics, acknowledges and venerates. All nature, whether visible or invisible, gives unceasing witness to Him. Angels adore Him, stars wonder at Him, seas bless Him, lands revere Him, and even the lower regions look up at Him.¹ Every human mind is conscious of Him, even though it cannot express Him. All things move at His command: springs gush forth, rivers flow, waves surge, all creatures bring forth their offspring. Winds are compelled to blow, rains come, seas are stirred, all things pour forth their fruitfulness everywhere. (2) He created for the special occupation of our first parents a Paradise² in the East as a world of eternal life. He planted the "tree of life" and in like manner set there another tree of the "knowledge of good and evil."³ He gave a command and pro-

6 1 Cor. 2.9.

7 Deut. 4.24.

8 Eph. 2.1.

1 Cf. Rom. 1.20; Ps. 96(97).1-7.

2 Gen. 2.8. For "first parents" Novatian uses the term *protoplasti* (literally "first-formed"), already used by Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitatis* 2.6 (CCL 2.1017).

3 Gen. 2.9.

nounced a sentence against any transgression.⁴ He saved Noah,⁵ who was a very just man, from the perils of the flood because of his innocence and faith. He took Enoch,⁶ admitted Abraham to His friendship,⁷ protected Isaac,⁸ and made Jacob prosperous.⁹ He placed Moses¹⁰ at the head of His people, delivered the groaning children of Israel from the yoke of slavery,¹¹ wrote the Law, and led the descendants of the patriarchs into the land of promise.¹² (3) He instructed the prophets by His Spirit and through all of them promised His Son, Christ; and He sent Him at the time He had solemnly promised to give Him. He willed that through Christ we should come to a knowledge of Him; He also lavished upon us the abundant treasures of His mercy by giving His Spirit to enrich the poor and downtrodden. (4) And because He is so generous, benevolent, and good, lest this whole world should wither after it had turned away the streams of His grace, He willed that apostles as spiritual fathers of our human race be sent by His Son into the entire world,¹³ so that poor humanity might acknowledge its Creator. If it should choose to follow Him, the human race would have One whom they could now address in their prayers as Father,¹⁴ instead of God. (5) His providence has run and at present runs its course not only among individual men but also through whole cities and states, whose overthrow He predicted by the words of the prophets. In fact, His providence runs its course even through the whole world itself. He has described as consequences of its unbelief the world's punishment, its plagues, losses, and final fate. (6) And lest anyone should think that this indefatigable providence of God does not also embrace the least things, the Lord said: "One of two sparrows shall not fall to the

4 Cf. Gen. 2.16-17.

5 Cf. Gen. 6.8 ff.; 2 Peter 2.5.

6 Cf. Gen. 5.24.

7 Cf. Gen. 17.2-4.

8 Cf. Gen. 22.12.

9 Cf. Gen. 30.43.

10 Cf. Exod. 3.10.

11 Cf. Exod. 13.14; cf. 20.2.

12 Cf. Gen. 15.7; Jos. 1.2.

13 Matt. 28.19; Mark 16.15; Eph. 4.11.

14 Matt. 6.9; Luke 11.2.

ground without the Father's Will; for even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."¹⁵ His care and providence neither allowed the garments of the Israelites to perish, nor the worthless shoes on their feet to wear out;¹⁶ nor, finally, did He permit the wide trousers¹⁷ of the captive young men to be burnt. And this is not without reason for if He who contains all things¹⁸ embraces all things (all things, however, and the whole sum are made up of individual parts), then it follows logically that His care will be bestowed on every individual part because His providence extends to the whole, whatever it be.¹⁹

(7) That is the reason He also "sits above the Cherubim";²⁰ that is, He presides over His various works. The living creatures, which hold dominion over the rest, are subject to His throne; and the crystal from above²¹ covers all things. In other words, all things are covered over by the heavens, made by God's command into a solid firmament²² from the fluid material of the waters, that the thick ice, hardened by the frost, might form a division between the waters which formerly covered the earth and bear upon its back, so to speak, the weight of the water above the earth. (8) The wheels that lie beneath it²³ signify the various periods of time in which all the component members of the world are constantly being whirled forward. Furthermore, feet have been given to these members that they may not always stand still, but move on. (9) All their limbs are studded with eyes²⁴ because the works of

God are to be contemplated with ever careful observation. And within their very bosom is a fire of glowing coals,²⁵ to signify that this world is hastening to the fiery day²⁶ of judgment, or that all the works of God are fiery, and not obscure,²⁷ but full of vigor; or for fear that these beings that have sprung from terrestrial beginnings would naturally grow numb because of the rigid nature of their origin. All were endowed, therefore, with the warm nature of an interior spirit, so that this warm nature mingling with their frigid bodies might supply all of them with proportionate constitutions for the exercise of life.²⁸ (10) This according to David, is God's chariot. "The chariot of God," he says, "is multiplied ten times a thousand times";²⁹ that is, it is incalculable, infinite, immeasurable. Under the yoke of the natural law which was given to all, some things are checked, as though they were drawn back by reins; whereas others are driven forward, as though they were urged on by slackened reins. (11) The world, this chariot of God and all that is therein, is guided by the angels³⁰ and the stars. Although their movements are varied—bound, nevertheless, by fixed laws—we see them guided to their goals according to the time measured out to them. So may we deservedly cry out with the Apostle as we admire the Maker and His works: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how inscrutable are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways,"³¹ and the rest of the passage.

15 Matt. 10.29-30; Luke 12.6-7.

16 Cf. Deut. 8.4; 29.4.

17 Cf. Dan. 3.94.

18 Cf. Wisd. 1.7.

19 Although God is transcendent, He is not a stranger to this world, as the Marcionites claimed.

20 Ps. 79(80).2; 98(99).1; Dan. 3.55.

21 Cf. Rev. 4.6.

22 Cf. Gen. 1.6.

23 Cf. Ezech. 1.15 ff.; 10.9.

24 Cf. Ezech. 1.18; 10.12; Rev. 4.6.

25 Cf. Ezech. 1.13.

26 2 Peter 3.12. For a study of the Stoic and patristic evolution of the world and final conflagration, see Spanneut, *op. cit.* 357-62.

27 Cf. John 3.19-21.

28 Novatian offers here a unique cosmic theory of Stoic inspiration (Spanneut, *op. cit.* 340-41).

29 Ps. 67(68).18.

30 Cf. Ps. 103(104).4. For the cosmic role of the angels in the Fathers, see Spanneut, *op. cit.* 329-30; J. Daniélou, *The Angels and Their Mission According to the Fathers of the Church* (Westminster, Md., 1957) 3-4.

31 Rom. 11.33.

Chapter 9

The same Rule of Truth teaches us, after we believe in the Father, to believe also in the Son of God, Christ Jesus, the Lord Our God,¹ nevertheless the Son of God. We are to believe in the Son of this God who is the one² and only God; namely, the Creator of all things, as has already been set forth above. (2) For we read that this Jesus Christ, the Son, I repeat, of this God, was not only promised in the Old Testament, but also has been manifested in the New Testament, fulfilling the shadows and types of all the prophecies³ concerning the presence of His Incarnate⁴ Truth. (3) The ancient prophecies and the Gospels alike bear witness that He is the Son of Abraham, that He is the Son of David.⁵ (4) Even Genesis bears witness to Him when it asserts: "To you will I give it and to your seed";⁶ it bears witness to Him when it describes how a man wrestled with Jacob⁷ and finally, when it states: "A prince shall not fail from Judah, nor a ruler from his thighs, until He shall come to whom it has been promised, and He shall be the expectation of nations."⁸ (5) Moses bears witness to Him, when he says: "Look for another to send"⁹ and again, when he testifies: "God shall raise up a prophet for you from your brethren: give heed to him, as it were to me."¹⁰ He

1 Novatian refers frequently to the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church; all the elements of this baptismal Creed in Novatian have been gathered for us by L. P. Caspari, *Ungedruckte, unbeachtete und wenig beachtete Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols und der Glaubensregel* (Christiania 1875) 3.463-65; for an abridged form, see A. D'Alès, *Novatien: Etude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du III^e siècle* (Paris 1925) 135-37.

2 Fausset, in his edition (p. 28 n.26), feels that the word *unus* formed part of Novatian's Creed; it was preserved here and omitted above in 1.1; in 16.5 Novatian writes "unum verum Deum."

3 See J. De Ghellinck *et al.*, *Pour l'histoire du mot "Sacramentum"* (Louvain 1924) 219.

4 "Corporatae veritatis." Cf. the *Verbum Corporatum* of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo (693 A. D.).

5 Cf. Matt. 1.1; Luke 3.23-38.

6 Gen. 17.8.

7 Cf. Gen 32.25.

8 Gen. 49.10.

9 Exod. 4.13.

10 Deut. 18.15.

bears witness of Him, finally, when he says: "You shall see your life hanging by night and day and shall not believe Him."¹¹ (6) Isaiah says of Him: "A rod shall go forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root."¹² He refers to the same, when he says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son."¹³ Isaiah bears witness to Him when he sets before us the works of healing that were to be done by Him: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as the hart, and tongue of the dumb shall be eloquent."¹⁴ He testifies of Him when he manifests His miracles of forbearance: "His voice shall not be heard in the public squares; a bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench."¹⁵ (7) He refers to Him again when he describes His Gospels:¹⁶ "I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the holy and sure promises of David."¹⁷ He bears witness to Him when He prophesies that the Gentiles shall believe in Him: "Behold, I have made Him a leader and a master to the Gentiles. The nations which have not known You shall call upon You, and the peoples that know You not shall flee to You."¹⁸ He bears witness to Christ, when referring to His Passion, he cries out: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before His shearer is dumb; so He opened not His mouth in His lowliness."¹⁹ (8) He bore witness to Him when he described the blows and stripes of His scourging: "By His bruises we were healed";²⁰ likewise, when he described His utter humiliation: "And we beheld Him, and He had no beauty or comeliness. A man in

11 Deut. 28.66. The Fathers of the Church often give this passage a Messianic interpretation; cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.18.3; Tertullian(?), *Adv. Iudaeos* 11; Cyprian, *Testimonia* 2.20; and Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* . . . 1.62.

12 Isa. 11.1.

13 Isa. 7.14.

14 Isa. 35.5-6.

15 Isa. 42.2-3.

16 Isaiah is often called the Evangelist of the redemption.

17 Isa. 55.3.

18 Isa. 55.4-5.

19 Isa. 53.7-8.

20 Isa. 53.5.

affliction and who knows how to bear infirmity."²¹ He bore witness that the people would not believe in Him: "I have stretched forth My hands all the day long to an unbelieving people."²² He foretells that He would rise again from the dead: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse and one who shall rise to rule the Gentiles: in Him shall the Gentiles hope, and His resting place shall be worthy of honor."²³ The time of His Resurrection is indicated: "We shall find Him ready, as it were, at daybreak."²⁴ He shall sit at the right hand of the Father: "The Lord says to My Lord, 'Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool'";²⁵ and He is represented as the possessor of all things: "Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession."²⁶ Finally, He is shown to be the Judge of all: "O God, give the King Your judgment, and Your justice to the king's son."²⁷ (9) I shall not pursue the matter further at this point; for the things proclaimed about Christ are known to all heretics, and are more than familiar to those who hold the truth.

Chapter 10

I must warn you that no other Christ should have been sought for in the Gospel than this one who was promised before by the Creator in the writings of the Old Testament, especially because the things that were predicted about Him have been fulfilled, and all that has been fulfilled was predicted beforehand. (2) To that counterfeit and spurious Christ, devised somehow from old wives' tales by heretics¹ who reject the authority of the Old Testament, I can, with reason, truly and boldly say: Who are you? From what place did you come? By whom were you sent? Why did you wish to come now? ²

21 Isa. 53.2-3.

22 Isa. 65.2.

23 Isa. 11.10.

24 Hosea 6.3.

25 Ps. 109(110).1.

26 Ps. 2.8.

27 Ps. 71(72).1.

1 Namely, the Docetae (especially Marcion and his follower Apelles) and the Gnostics.

2 A reference to the suddenness of the descent of the heavenly Christ according to Marcion; cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.11.

Why are you what you are? By what way did you manage to come? (3) Why did you not go to your own people, if not to prove, by coming among strangers that you have no people of your own? What have you to do with the Creator's world, or with man, the Creator's handiwork, or with the semblance of a body to which you deny the hope of resurrection? Why do you come to another man's servant,³ and why do you desire to disturb another man's son? Why are you trying to take me away from the Lord? ⁴ Why do you drive me to blaspheme against the Father and make me impious? (4) Or what will I obtain from you in the resurrection, if, when I lose my body, I do not get myself back? If you wish to save, you should have made man to whom you could give salvation. If you desire to deliver me from sin, you should have granted me the grace beforehand not to fall into sin. What approval of the Law do you carry about with you? What testimony for your stand have you in the voice of the prophets? (5) Or what genuine good can I promise myself from you, when I see that you have come as a phantom and not in reality? And if you hate the body, what are you doing with the semblance of a body? In fact, you are proved false⁵ in your claim to hate carrying about with you the substance of a body when you did not hesitate to assume the very semblance of one. For you ought to have hated even the imitation of a body, if you hated its reality. If you are another, you should have come in a different manner, so that you would not be called the Creator's son by your possession of even the appearance of flesh and body. Surely, if birth was odious to you because you hated the Creator's ordinance of marriage, you should have refused to assume even the very resemblance of a man born according to the Creator's ordinance of marriage.⁶

(6) Nor, in fact, do we acknowledge the Christ of the heretics, who existed (as they say) in appearance and not in reality. If he were a phantom and not reality, then he did not really perform any of these

3 Cf. Rom. 14.4.

4 Cf. *Adv. Marc.* 1.23.

5 The argument hinges on the fact that Christ Himself is *ipsa Veritas*; cf. Augustine, *De continentia* 10.24.

6 This heretical condemnation of marriage was based on the Gnostic conception of the essential evilness of matter.

actions that he is said to have performed. Nor do we acknowledge him to be Christ who in no way took upon himself our human body, inasmuch as he took nothing from Mary and consequently never came to us because he was not seen in our own bodily substance when he appeared. Finally, we do not acknowledge him to be a Christ who put on ethereal or sidereal flesh, as other heretics⁷ would have it, lest we should see any salvation⁸ of ours in him, if we did not also recognize the real substance of our own body. And we utterly reject anyone else who bears a body of any other kind whatever of heretical figment. (7) Not only Our Lord's Nativity but even His death refutes all these heretics. "And the Word," says John, "was made flesh and dwelt among us";⁹ consequently, He must have had our human body because the Word truly took our flesh. Blood flowed from His hands and feet and even from His very side, that He might prove Himself to be a sharer of our human body by dying according to the laws of our human dissolution. (8) The wounds of His very body proved that He was raised again from the dead in the same corporeal substance in which He died. Thus He showed us the conditions of our resurrection in His own flesh, by restoring in His Resurrection the same body which He had from us. Hence a law of resurrection is laid down because Christ is raised up in the substance of His body as a model for others. (9) Because it is written: "Flesh and blood shall not obtain the kingdom of God,"¹⁰ it is not meant that the substance of our flesh, which was fashioned by the hands of God so as not to perish, was condemned. On the contrary, only the guilt of the flesh is censured, the guilt which was caused by man's deliberate and rash rebellion against the claims of divine law. After this guilt has been taken away in baptism and in the dissolution brought about by death, then the flesh is restored to salvation, because the flesh is recalled to a state of innocence,¹¹ after the mortal condition of sin has been put aside.

⁷ The Syrian Gnostics Saturninus or Satornil, and others. According to Tertullian (*De carne Christi* 6.8), Apelles attributed a sidereal body to Christ.

⁸ The Docetae compromised the reality of Christ's passion and thereby the value of the redemption.

⁹ John 1.14.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 15.50.

¹¹ Cf. Tertullian, *De baptismo* 5.

Chapter 11

Lest we seem—by our assertion that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Creator, manifested Himself in the substance of a real body—to have joined forces with or given material for controversy to other heretics,¹ who in this connection maintain that He was solely and simply a man and who therefore are very eager to prove that He was a mere man and nothing more, we do not express ourselves in such a manner concerning the substance of His body and claim that He was simply and solely a man. On the contrary we maintain that, by the fact that the divinity of the Word was permixed in that very matter,² He was also God according to the Scriptures. (2) It is very dangerous to say of Christ—the Saviour of the human race, the Lord and Prince of the whole world, to whom "all things have been" entrusted and "granted by His Father,"³ by whom all things were made, all things created, all things set in order, the King of all ages⁴ and of all times, the Ruler of all the angels, before whom there was nothing besides the Father—to say that He is only man and to deny His divine authority in these things. This insult from the heretics will also extend to God the Father, if God the Father could not beget God the Son. (3) No blindness on the part of the heretics shall lay down the law for the truth. Because they maintain one thing about Christ and do not maintain the other, and because they see one side of Him and not the other, never shall the heretics take away from us the truth which they do not see for the sake of what they do see. (4) For they consider in Him the frailties of man, but they do not regard the powers of a God. They reflect on the infirmities of His flesh, but they exclude from their minds the powers of His divinity. If this proof drawn from the infirmities of Christ has such efficacy as to prove that He is man precisely because of those infirmities, then the proof of His divinity, drawn from His miracles, will have enough efficacy to show on account of His mighty works that He is also God. If His sufferings

¹ The Adoptianists.

² Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.27.66; Tertullian, *De anima* 52.

³ Matt. 11.27.

⁴ 1 Tim. 1.17.

manifest human frailty in Him, why should not His works confirm the divine power in Him? If the miracles do not suffice to prove Him God, then neither will the sufferings alone suffice to prove Him man. (5) Whatever principle is posited in either case will be found to be suspect in the other. If it cannot be proved that He is God because of His miracles, there will also be the danger of not being able to show that He is man because of His sufferings. One must not lean to one side and incline away from the other, for whoever rejects a portion of the truth will never hold the complete truth. (6) Just as Scripture proclaims that Christ is also God, so, too, does it proclaim that God is very Man. It describes Jesus Christ as Man, just as it describes Christ the Lord as God. Scripture proclaims Him to be not only the Son of God but also the Son of Man; it not only calls Him the Son of Man but has also been accustomed to refer to Him as the Son of God, so that He is both because He is of both. Otherwise—if He were only the one—He could not be the other. (7) Nature itself demands that we believe that he is a man who is of man. Likewise it demands that we believe that he is God who is of God;⁵ otherwise, if He were not also God, when He is of God, then He would not be man, though He is of man. Both natures alike would be endangered by the denial of one or the other, inasmuch as one proves to have been discredited by the overthrow of the other. (8) Therefore, let those who read in Scripture that the Man Christ Jesus is the Son of Man, also read there that this same Jesus is called both God and Son of God.⁶ In the same manner that He, as Man, is of Abraham,⁷ even so, as God, is He also before Abraham⁸ himself. In the same manner that He, as Man, is the Son of David,⁹ so is He also, as God, called the Lord of David.¹⁰ And in the same manner that He, as Man, is made under the Law,¹¹ so is He also, as God, declared to be the

5 Cf. John 8.42.

6 Cf. 1 Tim. 2.5.

7 Cf. Matt. 1.1.

8 Cf. John 8.58.

9 Cf. Matt. 20.31; 22.42.

10 Cf. Matt. 22.43-45.

11 Cf. Gal. 4.4.

Lord of the Sabbath.¹² In the same manner that He, as Man, endured the sentence of death, we find that, as God, He has all judgment over the living and the dead.¹³ In the same manner that He, as Man, is born after the world existed, so, as God, is He shown to have existed before the world.¹⁴ In the same manner that He, as Man, was born "of the seed of David,"¹⁵ so in like manner is it said that through Him, as God, the world was made.¹⁶ In the same manner that He, as Man, was after many, He was, as God, before all men. In the same manner that He, as Man, was lower in rank than the others,¹⁷ as God He was greater than all. In the same manner, that He, as Man, ascended into heaven,¹⁸ as God, He first descended from heaven.¹⁹ In the same manner that he, as Man, goes to the Father,²⁰ so as a Son obedient to His Father shall he descend from the Father. (9) Therefore, if limitations give evidence of human frailty in Him, His majesty affirms His divine power. However, when you read about both these truths, there is danger that you will believe not both of them but only one. Since we read of both attributes in Christ, we should believe both of them so that our faith may be true only if it is also complete. (10) If one of these two truths ceases to have a part in our faith, while the other truth (and precisely that truth which is of lesser importance) is accepted as a matter of faith, then the Rule of Truth has been shaken. Such temerity will not give salvation; in its stead it will, through the rejection of faith, bring about a serious danger of death.

Chapter 12

Why, then, should we hesitate to say what Scripture does not hesitate to express? Why should the truth of Faith waver where the

12 Matt. 12.8; Mark 2.28; Luke 6.5.

13 Cf. John 5.22.

14 Cf. John 17.5.

15 Rom. 1.3.

16 John 1.10.

17 Cf. Isa. 53.3.

18 Cf. Mark 16.19; Luke 24.51; Acts 1.9.

19 Cf. John 6.38, 63.

20 Cf. John 14.3, 28; Acts 1.11.

authority of Scripture has never faltered? For behold, the prophet Hosea says in the person of the Father: "I will not save them by bow, nor by horses; but I will save them by the Lord their God."¹ (2) If God says that He will save them by God and if God does not save except by Christ, then why should man hesitate to call Christ God when he realizes that the Father declares, through the Scriptures, that He is God. In fact, if God the Father can not save, except by God, no one can be saved by God the Father, unless he has acknowledged that Christ is God, in whom and through whom the Father promises to grant salvation.² Consequently, whoever acknowledges that He is God, finds salvation in Christ who is God; whoever does not acknowledge that He is God, has lost salvation, which he cannot find elsewhere but in Christ who is God.

(3) For just as Isaiah says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call His name Emmanuel,"³ "which is interpreted 'God with us,'" so too, does Christ Himself say: "Behold I am with you, even to the consummation of the world."⁴ God, then, is with us, and what is more, He is even in us. Christ is with us; therefore it is He whose name is "God with us," because He is also with us. Or is it possible that He is not with us? Then, how can He say that He is with us? He is, therefore, with us, and because He is with us, He is called Emmanuel, "God with us." God, then, because He is with us, was called "God with us." (4) The same prophet says: "Be strong, you feeble hands and weak knees; be comforted, you that are faint-hearted, be strong, fear not. Behold, our God will render judgment: He will come and save us; then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be eloquent."⁵ (5) If the prophet says that these signs—which have

1 Hosea 1.7.

2 Cf. Acts 4.12.

3 Isa. 7.14. St. Justin (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 67, 71, 84; tr. by T. B. Falls, FC 6.254, 263, 281f.) was the first Christian writer to defend, at length, the virginal conception of Mary contained in Isa. 7.14 against the Jewish interpretations.

4 Matt. 1.23.

5 Matt. 28.20.

6 Isa. 35.3-6.

already been wrought—will be the future signs of God's advent, then let the heretics either acknowledge that Christ is the Son of God, at whose coming and by whom these miracles of healing were wrought, or—defeated by the truth of Christ's divinity and falling into the other heresy,⁷ inasmuch as they refuse to confess that Christ is the Son of God and God—let them confess that He is the Father. Since they have been restrained by the words of the prophets, they can no longer deny that Christ is God. (6) What, then, can they reply, when the miracles which were prophesied as taking place at the coming of God, were actually wrought at the advent of Christ? In what way do they think Christ is God? For they can no longer deny that He is God. Do they think He is the Father or the Son? If they accept Him as the Son, why do they deny that the Son of God is God? If they accept Him as the Father, why are they not following those who are seen to hold such blasphemies? At any rate, in this debate with them about the truth, it suffices for our present purpose that, no matter how they are refuted, they confess that Christ, whose divinity they wished to deny, is also God.

(7) He says through Habakkuk the prophet: "God shall come from the south, and the holy one from the dark and dense mountain."⁸ Whom would they have come from the South? ⁹ If they say that God the Father almighty came, then God the Father came from a place; consequently, He is also enclosed by space and contained within the limits of some abode. Thus the sacrilegious heresy of Sabellius, as we said, takes concrete form because of these men who believe that Christ is not the Son but the Father. It is strange how these heretics, while insisting that Christ is a mere man, make an about-face and acknowledge that Christ is the Father, God almighty. (8) If Christ, who is also called God by the Scriptures, was born in Bethlehem, which geographically faces towards the South, then this God is rightly described as coming from the South, because it was foreseen that He would come from Bethlehem. (9) Therefore let

7 The Sabellian heresy.

8 Hab. 3.3.

9 According to Novatian, Christ is the God who comes *ab Africo*: "from the South (Bethlehem)" by synecdoche. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.33.11.

them decide just who this Person from the South is, the Father or the Son? For Scripture says that God will come from the South. If He is the Son, why do they hesitate to say that Christ is also God, for Scripture says that God will come? If He is the Father, why do they hesitate to associate themselves with the rashness of Sabellius, who says that Christ is the Father? The truth of the matter is that, whether they call Him the Father or the Son, they are compelled, though against their will, to abandon their own heresy since they are accustomed to say that Christ is only a man. The very facts constrain them to declare that He is God, whether they choose to call Him the Father or the Son.

Chapter 13

In like manner, John, in his description of Christ's Nativity, says: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we saw His glory—the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father—full of grace and of truth."¹ For "His name is called the Word of God"² also, and not without reason. "My heart," he says, "has uttered a good word," the word which he subsequently calls by the name of king, when he says: "I speak my works to the king."³ (2) For "through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made."⁴ "For whether they be Thrones," says the Apostle, "or Dominations, or Virtues, or Powers, all things, visible and invisible, exist through Him."⁵ This is the Word who "came into His own and His own received Him not."⁶ For "the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not."⁷ However, this "Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God."⁸ (3) When John states in the latter part of his prologue that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt

1 John 1.14.

2 Rev. 19.13.

3 Ps. 44(45).2, quoted by Tertullian, *Adv. Praxeas* 7, 11.

4 John 1.3.

5 Col. 1.16.

6 John 1.11.

7 John 1.10.

8 John 1.1.

among us,"⁹ who can doubt that Christ, whose birth it is, and because He was made flesh, is Man? And because He is the Word of God, who can hesitate for a moment to declare that He is God, especially when one realizes that the Gospel account has associated both these natures in the unique union of Christ's Nativity?¹⁰

(4) He it is who "comes forth as a bridegroom from His bridal chamber and rejoiced as a giant to run His course; His going forth is from the highest heaven and His return even to the height thereof."¹¹ For He [returns] even to the height; "since no one has ascended into heaven except Him who has descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven."¹² He repeats this very same fact when He says: "Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with You before the world existed."¹³ (5) If this Word descended from heaven as a bridegroom to take on our flesh, so that in taking flesh He might ascend again as Son of Man to that place whence, as Son of God, the Word had descended, then assuredly, because of a mutual bond, the flesh bears the Word of God, and the Son of God assumes the weakness of the flesh. He ascends with His spouse, the flesh, to the same place from which He had descended without the flesh and receives now that glory which He is shown to have had before the creation of the world. This proves, without the least doubt, that He is God. Nevertheless, since the world itself is said to have been created after Him, it is evident that it was created through Him. This fact itself gives proof of the glory and the authority of the divinity that is in Him, through whom the world was made.

(6) Now if Christ sees the secrets of the heart,¹⁴ Christ is certainly God, since God alone knows the secrets of the heart.¹⁵ If the same

9 John 1.14.

10 Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 27.

11 Ps. 18(19).6-7. The mystical interpretation—Christ the "Groom" issued from Mary's womb—of this psalm in terms of the Incarnation is very ancient; cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.33.13; Justin, *Apol.* 1.54 (tr. by Falls, FC 6.93); *Dial.* 64, 69, Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.11; Cyprian, *Test.* 2.19.

12 John 3.13.

13 John 17.5.

14 Cf. Matt. 9.4; John 2.25.

15 Cf. 3 Kings (1 Kings) 8.39.

Christ forgives sins, Christ is certainly God because no one can forgive sins but God alone.¹⁶ If Christ came down from heaven in coming into the world, Christ is certainly God, because no mere man can come from heaven.¹⁷ If the statement: "I and the Father are one,"¹⁸ can be said by no man and if Christ in the consciousness of His divinity makes this statement, Christ is certainly God. If the apostle Thomas, finally convinced by all the proofs and the facts of Christ's divinity, says in reply to Christ: "My lord and My God,"¹⁹ Christ is certainly God. If the apostle Paul also writes in his epistles: "Of whom are the fathers, and of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever,"²⁰ Christ is certainly God. If the same apostle declares that he is "an apostle sent not from men by man, but by Jesus Christ,"²¹ and asserts that "he learned the Gospel not from men or through man, but received it from Jesus Christ,"²² Christ is certainly God.

(7) At this point, therefore, one of two alternatives must be true. Since it is evident that all things were made through Christ, either He is before all things, because "all things are through Him,"²³ and consequently He is God, or else, because He is man, He is after all things, and consequently nothing was made through Him. But we cannot say that nothing was made through Him, since we know that it is written: "All things were made through Him."²⁴ He is not after all things; that is, He is not a mere man who is after all things; for He is also God because God is before all things. He is before all things because "all things are through Him";²⁵ otherwise, were He only a man, nothing would be through Him. On the other hand, if all things were made through Him, He would not be a mere man. Were He merely a man, all things would not be made through Him; in fact,

16 Cf. Matt. 9.2; Mark 2.5; Luke 5.20.

17 Cf. John 3.13.

18 John 10.30.

19 John 20.28.

20 Rom. 9.5.

21 Gal. 1.1.

22 Cf. Gal. 1.11-12.

23 John 1.3.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*

nothing would be made through Him. (8) What, then, do the heretics reply: that nothing is through Him, hence He is a mere man? Then, how are all things through Him? Therefore He is not only Man but also God because all things are through Him. Consequently, we must understand not only that Christ is not a mere man who is after all things but that He is also God because all things were made through Him. Or how can you say that He is only man, when you behold Him also in the flesh? Certainly if both these truths are carefully considered, one must necessarily believe both truths.

Chapter 14

Yet the heretic still hesitates to say that Christ is God, even though he notes that it has been proved in so many words and by so many facts that He is God. (2) If Christ is only man, how did He "come unto His own"¹ when He came into this world, since man could not have made a world? (3) If Christ is only man, how is "the world" said to have been "made through Him,"² when it is stated, not that the world was created through man but that man was created after the world? (4) If Christ is only man, how is it that Christ is not only of the seed of David³ but "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"?⁴ Though the first man was not born of human seed,⁵ still he was not compounded from the union of the Word and flesh, simply because he is not "the Word made flesh, [who] dwelt among us."⁶ (5) If Christ is only man, how does "He who comes down from heaven bear witness to that which He has seen and heard,"⁷ when it is evident that man cannot come from heaven because he cannot be born there? (6) If Christ is only man, how are "things visible and invisible, Thrones, Virtues and Dominations" said to have been "created through Him and in Him,"⁸ when the heavenly pow-

1 John 1.11.

2 John 1.10.

3 Rom. 1.3.

4 John 1.14.

5 Gen. 2.7; cf. John 1.13.

6 John 1.14.

7 John 3.31-32.

8 Col. 1.16.

ers could not have been created through man, since they must have existed before man? (7) If Christ is only man, how is He present wherever He is invoked⁹—since it is not man's nature but God's to be able to be present everywhere? (8) If Christ is only man, why is a man called upon in prayer as a mediator, when calling upon a man to grant salvation is considered useless? (9) If Christ is only man, why is hope put in Him,¹⁰ when hope in man is declared to be accursed?¹¹ (10) If Christ is only man, why cannot He be denied without ruin to one's soul,¹² when it is declared that an offense against man can be forgiven?¹³ (11) If Christ is only man, how does John the Baptist bear witness of Him when he says: "He who comes after me was made before me, for He was before me"?¹⁴ If Christ were only man, then, being born after John, He could not be before John, unless he preceded him as God. (12) If Christ is only man, how is it that "what the Father does, the Son also does in like manner,"¹⁵ when man cannot do works like the heavenly works of God? (13) If Christ is only man, how is it that "as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself,"¹⁶ when man cannot have life in himself after the manner of God the Father, because he is not glorious in eternity, but is made with the perishable matter of mortality? (14) If Christ is only man, how could He say: "I am the bread of eternal life that came down from heaven,"¹⁷ when man who is himself mortal neither can be the bread of life, nor has descended from heaven, since no matter of frailty can be found in heaven? (15) If Christ is only man, how does He assert: "For no man has ever seen God the Father; but He who is from God, He has seen"¹⁸ God? For if Christ is only man, He could not have seen God because "no man has seen God."¹⁹ If He has seen

9 Cf. Matt. 18.20.

10 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.19; 1 Tim. 1.1.

11 Cf. Jer. 17.5.

12 Cf. Matt. 10.33.

13 Cf. Matt. 6.14-15; 18.35; Mark 11.25; also 1 Kings (1 Sam.) 2.25.

14 John 1.15.

15 John 5.19.

16 John 5.26.

17 John 6.51.

18 Cf. John 6.46.

19 John 1.18; 1 John 4.12.

God because He is of God, then he wished Himself to be considered more than man since He has seen God. (16) If Christ is only man, why does He say: "What if you shall see the Son of Man ascending to that place where He was before?"²⁰ But He did ascend into heaven; therefore He was there before, in that He returned to the same place where He was before. (17) Now if He was sent from heaven by the Father, He certainly is not a mere man; for as we said, man could not come from heaven. Therefore He was not there before as man; He ascended to that place where as man He had not been. However the Word of God, who was there, descended—the Word, I say, of God who is also God, through whom "all things were made, and without whom nothing was made."²¹ Thus it was not man that came thence from heaven but the Word of God, that is, God, descended from that place.

Chapter 15

If Christ is only man, how is it that He says: "Even if I bear witness to Myself, my witness is true, because I know where I came from and where I go. You judge according to the flesh"?¹ Note that He also says in this passage that He will return to the place from which He testified that He previously came—sent, namely, from heaven. Therefore He descended from the place from which He came, just as He goes to the place from which He descended. Consequently, if Christ were only man, He would not have come from that place and—since He had not come from that place—He could not return there. By coming, however, from that place from which man cannot come, He showed that He came as God. (2) But the Jews, ignorant and unacquainted, as they were, with this descent of His, made these heretics their heirs, addressing them with the very same words: You do not know from what place I come, nor where I go. You judge according to the flesh."² So these heretics, as well as the Jews, maintaining that the carnal birth of Christ was His only birth,

20 John 6.62.

21 John 1.3.

1 John 8.14-15.

2 *Ibid.*

believed that Christ was nothing else but a man. They do not reflect that since man could not come down from heaven, so as to be able accordingly to return to heaven, He who descended from heaven, whence man could not have come, is God.

(3) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world"?³ Does it follow that Christ is a mere man simply because every man is of this world, and Christ, as one of them, is in this world?⁴ Not at all! Rather, consider what He says: "I am not of this world."⁵ Does He lie then? If He is only man, He is of this world. On the other hand, if He is not lying, He is not of this world. Therefore, He is not a mere man since He is not of this world. (4) In order that His identity might not remain unknown, He made it quite clear whence He was: "I", said He, "am from above";⁶ that is, from heaven, whence man cannot come, for man was not made in heaven. He who is from above is God; therefore He is not of this world. In a certain sense, He is of this world; consequently, Christ is not only God, but also Man. Accordingly, just as He is not of this world according to the divinity of the Word, so is He of this world according to the frailty of the body which He assumed. Man is joined to God, and God is coupled to Man.⁷ (5) However, in this passage Christ emphasized only one side, His divinity. Since the Jews in their blindness considered only the human side of Christ, in this passage He passed over in silence the fragility of the body, which is of this world, and spoke only of His divinity, which is not of this world. To the same extent that the Jews were inclined to believe that He was only man did Christ, on His part, draw them to consider His divinity so that they would believe He was God. He wished to overcome their incredulity regarding His divinity by omitting, for the time being, any mention of His human heritage and by simply placing before them His divinity alone.

3 John 8.23.

4 Cf. John 1.10.

5 John 8.23.

6 *Ibid.*

7 An early expression of what was later called the Hypostatic Union.

(6) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "From God I came forth and have come,"⁸ when it is a well-known fact that man was made by God and did not come forth from God? Man, then, did not come forth from God in the same manner that the Word of God came forth, concerning whom it is said: "My heart has brought forth a good Word."⁹ Since this Word is from God, therefore, it is "with God";¹⁰ and because it was not uttered without effect, it rightly does all things: "All things were made through Him and without Him, nothing was made."¹¹ Now this Word, through whom all things were made, [is God]. "And the Word," John says, "was God."¹² Therefore God proceeded from God, since the Word who proceeded is God who proceeded from God. (7) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "If any man keep my word, he will never see death"?¹³ What is never seeing death but immortality? Immortality, however, is the companion of divinity because divinity is immortal, and immortality is the fruit of divinity.¹⁴ Now every man is mortal; so immortality cannot come from what is mortal. Therefore immortality cannot derive its origin from Christ as mortal man. However, He says: "Whoever keeps my word will never see death."¹⁵ Hence the word of Christ bestows immortality and through immortality bestows divinity.¹⁶ If man, since he is himself mortal, cannot claim to make someone else immortal and if Christ's word not only claims but actually bestows immortality, then you can be certain that He who grants this immortality is not just a mere man. He could not bestow it, were He only a man. But He proves that He is God by bestowing divinity through immortality and by offering divinity which He could not bestow unless He were God.

(8) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "I am before Abraham"?¹⁷ No man can be before him from whom he himself takes his

8 John 8.42.

9 Ps. 44(45).2.

10 John 1.1.

11 John 1.3.

12 John 1.1.

13 John 8.51.

14 Cf. Wisd. 6.19.

15 John 8.51. For the descent from Abraham, see Matt. 1.1-16.

16 Cf. 2 Peter 1.4.

17 John 8.58.

origin; nor is it possible that a thing existed before that from which it itself took its origin. Yet, Christ, even though He descends from Abraham, says that He is before Abraham. Either He is lying, therefore, and deceiving us (if He, who actually descended from Abraham, was not before Abraham), or He is not deceiving us (if He is also God because He was before Abraham). For if He had not been God, it is evident that He could not have been before Abraham because He had really descended from Abraham. (9) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "And I shall know them, and my own follow Me; and I give them everlasting life, and they shall never perish."¹⁸ Now, every man is bound by the laws of mortality and therefore cannot even keep himself alive forever; much less can he keep another man alive forever. Christ, nevertheless, promises to give salvation forever. And if He does not give it, He is a liar; if He does give it, He is God. But He does not deceive, for He gives what He promises. Therefore He is God, who offers eternal salvation, which man, who cannot even save himself, cannot grant to another.

(10) If Christ is only man, what does He mean when He says: "I and the Father are one"?¹⁹ How can "I and the Father be one,"²⁰ if He is not both God and Son, who therefore can be said to be one thing²¹ [with the Father] because He is of Him and because He is His Son and because He is born of Him inasmuch as He is found to have proceeded from Him? This proves that He is also God. (11) The Jews considered this odious and believed that it was blasphemy, since Christ had shown by these words that He was God. Therefore they ran to get stones and passionately set about to cast them at Him.²² He vigorously refuted His adversaries with the precedent and testimony of the Scriptures. "If [the Law] called them gods," He says, "to whom the words of God were addressed—and the Scripture cannot be broken—do you say to Me whom the Father has made holy and sent into this world. 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the

18 John 10.27-28.

19 John 10.30.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Unum.* Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 22.

22 Cf. John 10.31.

Son of God"?²³ (12) With these words He did not deny that He was God; on the contrary he affirmed that He was God. If, beyond any question of a doubt, they are said to be gods to whom the words of God were addressed, much more is He God who is found to be better than all of them. And yet He refuted their slanderous blasphemy in a fitting manner by a proper ordering [of relations]; for He wants Himself to be considered God and considered precisely as the Son of God, not the Father Himself. In fact, He said that He was sent, and pointed out to them: "Many works have I shown you from My Father."²⁴ Therefore, He wanted Himself to be considered not the Father but the Son. Also, in the last part of His defense He made mention of the Son, not the Father: "You say, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God.'"²⁵ (13) So, with regard to the charge of blasphemy, He answered that He was the Son, not the Father, whereas, in regard to His own divinity, He proved that He was the Son and God when He said: "I and the Father are one."²⁶ Therefore, He is God, but God in such a manner that He is the Son, not the Father.

Chapter 16

If Christ is only man, how is it that He himself says: "And whoever sees and believes in Me, shall never die"?¹ Whereas he who trusts in a mere man is said to be accursed,² he who believes in Christ is not accursed; on the contrary, it is stated that he will never die. Consequently, if He is only man, as the heretics would have it, how is it that whoever believes in Him shall never die, since he who trusts in man is considered accursed? Or if he is not accursed, but rather, as one reads, destined for the attainment of eternal life, Christ is not man only but God; and whoever believes in Him not only avoids the danger of such a curse but also attains to the fruit of justice.

23 John 10.35-36.

24 John 10.32.

25 John 10.36.

26 John 10.30.

1 John 11.26; 6.40.

2 Jer. 17.5.

(2) If Christ is only man, how does He say that the Paraclete will receive of what is His and will declare these things? ³ For the Paraclete does not receive anything from man, but rather gives knowledge to man. Nor does the Paraclete learn future things from man; He instructs him about things to come. Therefore, either the Paraclete did not receive from Christ, as Man, what He should make known, simply because man will never be able to give anything to the Paraclete, from whom he himself must receive (and in that case, Christ not only errs but also deceives in the present passage when He says that the Paraclete will receive from Him, as Man, the things which He will make known), or He does not deceive us—just as He does not deceive—and the Paraclete receives from Christ the things which He will make known. (3) If He received from Christ the things which He will make known, then surely Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ. Now, the fact that the Paraclete is less than Christ proves that Christ is also God, from whom He received what He makes known. This, then, is a great testimony to Christ's divinity, inasmuch as the Paraclete, having been found to be less than Christ, takes from Him what He gives to others. If Christ were only man, Christ would receive from the Paraclete what He should say; the Paraclete would not receive from Christ what He should make known.

(4) If Christ is only man, why did He lay down for us a rule to be believed when He said: "Now this is everlasting life, that they may know Thee, the one and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"? ⁴ If He did not wish Himself to be considered also God, why did He add: "and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent," ⁵ unless He wished to be acknowledged also as God. If He did not wish Himself to be considered God, He would have added: "and the man Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." As a matter of fact, He did not add anything; nor did Christ teach us in this present passage that He

³ John 16.14.

⁴ John 17.3.

⁵ *Ibid.*

was only man; He associated Himself with God. He wanted us to understand that He was, on account of this association, also God—as He truly is. (5) Therefore we must believe, according to the prescribed Rule, in the Lord, the one true God. Similarly we must believe in Him whom He has sent, Jesus Christ, who would never have associated Himself with the Father, as we have said, unless He had wished to be acknowledged also as God. He would have separated Himself from Him if He had not wished to be understood to be God. He would have ranked Himself only with men, if He had known that He was only man; and He would not have associated Himself with God, if He had not known that He was also God. Now He does not even mention His humanity, because no one doubts that He is man. He associates Himself with God, and rightly so, in order to lay down a formal statement of His divinity for those who were to believe in Him.

(6) If Christ is only man, how does He say: "And now glorify Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was"? ⁶ If He had glory with God before the world was and retained His glory with the Father, certainly He existed before the world. For He could not have had this glory unless He had existed before the world, so as to keep the glory. No one who possesses anything can have anything unless He exists before it. But Christ has glory before the creation of the world; therefore, He existed before the creation of the world. Unless He had existed before the creation of the world, He could not have had glory before the creation of the world, because He Himself would not have existed. In fact, man, who existed after the world, could not have glory before the creation of the world. Christ had it; therefore, He existed before the world. Consequently, He who existed before the world was not man only but God, for He existed before the world and possessed glory before the world existed.

(7) Nor can anyone say that it is a question here of predestination, since Scripture contains nothing to that effect. Let those who think this add it [to the written word]. However, woe is as much pro-

⁶ John 17.5. Novatian is contending with the Artemonites, who maintained that Jesus Christ was God only by predestination.

nounced upon those who add to, as upon those who take away from, what is written.⁷ Therefore what cannot be added to the written word cannot be asserted. Accordingly, after we have eliminated the possibility of predestination because it is not contained in the written word, we conclude that Christ existed in substance before the creation of the world. In fact, He is "the Word" through whom "all things were made, and without whom nothing was made."⁸ (8) Even if someone does say that He was glorious in predestination and that this predestination took place before the creation of the world, due order must be observed. And there will be a considerable number of men before Christ destined to glory. In such a determination to glory, Christ will be considered less than other men, because He is ranked after them in time. In fact, if this glory was in predestination, then Christ was the last to receive this predestination to glory; for we see that Adam was predestined before Him, as were also Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and the rest. (9) Since the order of all persons and things is at the disposal of God's arrangement, many will be said to have been predestined to glory before the predestination of Christ. Accordingly, Christ is found to be less than other men, He who is really better and greater and more ancient even than the angels themselves. (10) Either all these arguments are to be discarded, so that divinity may not be asserted of Christ, or if these arguments cannot be refuted, let the heretics give back to Christ His own divinity.

Chapter 17

What would you reply if I should say that Moses follows this same Rule of Truth and has given us enough in the beginning of his writing to teach us that all things are created and founded through the Son of God, that is, through the Word of God? He states what John and the rest affirm. In fact, John and the others are known to have received from Him what they assert. (2) For John says, "All things were made through Him and nothing was made without

⁷ Cf. Deut. 4.2; 13.1; Rev. 22.18-19.

⁸ John 1.3.

Him,"¹ and the Prophet says, "I speak of my works to the king,"² and Moses represents God as commanding first that there be light, then that the heavens be firmly established, the waters be gathered together, the dry land appear, fruit come forth according to its seed, animals be produced, the luminaries and stars be set in the heavens.³ He thus makes it clear that no one else was then present with God, on whom could be enjoined the task of executing these works, save Him through whom "all things were made, and without whom nothing was made."⁴ (3) And as He is the Word of God ("My heart has uttered a good word"),⁵ he shows that the Word was in the beginning, that this Word was with the Father, and that the Word was God, all things were made through Him. Furthermore, this "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"⁶ namely, Christ, the Son of God. We acknowledge Him to be later Man according to the flesh, just as we know that He was the Word of God and God before the creation of the world. Consequently, we believe and hold, according to the teaching of the Old and the New Testaments, that Christ Jesus is both God and Man.

(4) Again, what would you reply, if I should say that Moses introduces God as saying; "Let us make man to our image and likeness";⁷ and further on, "and God made man, to the image of God He made him, male and female He made them"?⁸ If, as we have already shown, it is the Son of God through whom all things were made, then assuredly, it is the Son of God through whom man—for whose sake all things were made—was also created. (5) When God commands that man be made, He who makes man is said to be God; however, it is the Son of God, namely, the Word of God, "through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made,"⁹

¹ John 1.3.

² Ps. 44.2.

³ Cf. Gen. 1.3 ff.

⁴ John 1.3.

⁵ Ps. 44(45).2.

⁶ John 1.14.

⁷ Gen. 1.26.

⁸ Gen. 1.27.

⁹ John 1.3.

who makes man. Furthermore, this "Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us";¹⁰ therefore Christ is God. Accordingly, man was made through Christ, through the Son of God. If God made man to the image of God, then He who made man to the image of God must be God. Therefore Christ is God. Consequently, the authority of the Old Testament regarding the Person of Christ remains unshaken because it is supported by the testimony of the New Testament.¹¹ Nor is the force of the New Testament undermined, since its truth has under it the roots of this same Old Testament. (6) They who take it for granted that Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, is only man and not also God are really acting contrary to both the Old and the New Testament, inasmuch as they are destroying the authority and the truth of both the Old and the New Testaments.

(7) Finally, what would you reply if I should say that the same Moses everywhere represents God the Father as boundless, without end? He cannot be confined by space, for He includes all space. He is not in one place, but rather all place is in Him. He contains all things and embraces all things; therefore He cannot descend or ascend inasmuch as He contains all things and fills all things. Yet Moses represents God as descending to the tower which the sons of men were building, seeking to inspect it and saying: "Come, let us go down quickly, and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."¹² Who do the heretics think was the God that descended to the tower in this passage, and then sought to visit these men? Was He God the Father? In that case, God is enclosed in a place; how then does He embrace all things? (8) Or is it possible that he speaks of an angel descending with other angels and saying: "Come, and let us go down quickly, and confuse their language"? On the contrary, we note in Deuteronomy that it was God who recounted these things and God who spoke, where it is written: "When He scattered abroad the sons of Adam, He set up the boundaries of the people according to the number of the angels of

¹⁰ John 1.14.

¹¹ Cf. Augustine, *Quaestionum 73 in Exodum* (CCL 33.106; PL 34.623); *De catechizandis rudibus* 4.8 (tr. by J. P. Christopher, ACW 2.23).

¹² Gen. 11.7.

God."¹³ Therefore the Father did not descend, nor did an angel command these things, as the facts clearly indicate. (9) Accordingly, the only remaining conclusion is that He descended of whom the apostle Paul says: "He who descended, He it is who ascended also above all the heavens, that He might fill all things,"¹⁴ that is, the Son of God, the Word of God. But "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."¹⁵ This must be Christ. Therefore we must affirm that Christ is God.

Chapter 18

Please note that the same Moses says in another passage that God appeared to Abraham.¹ Yet the same Moses hears from God that no man can see God and live.² If God cannot be seen, how did God appear? If He appeared, how is it that He cannot be seen? (2) For John says in like manner: "No one has ever seen God."³ And the apostle Paul says: "Whom no man has seen or can see."⁴ But certainly, Scripture does not lie; therefore, God was really seen. Accordingly, this can only mean that it was not the Father, who never has been seen, that was seen, but the Son, who is wont both to descend and to be seen, for the simple reason that He has descended. (3) In fact, He is "the image of the invisible God,"⁵ that our limited human nature and frailty might in time grow accustomed to see God the Father in Him who is the Image of God, that is, in the Son of God. Gradually and by degrees human frailty had to be strengthened by means of the Image for the glory of being able one day to see God the Father. (4) Great things are dangerous if they

¹³ Deut 32.8. Novatian sees in the expression "scattered abroad" an allusion to the dispersion at the tower of Babel.

¹⁴ Eph. 4.10.

¹⁵ John 1.14.

¹ Cf. Gen. 12.7; 18.1.

² Exod. 33.20.

³ John 1.18; 1 John 4.12.

⁴ 1 Tim. 6.16.

⁵ Col. 1.15.

happen suddenly. Even the light of the sun, striking suddenly with excessive brilliance upon eyes accustomed to the darkness, will not manifest the light of day but rather will cause blindness. Therefore, so that our human eyes may not suffer much injury, the darkness is gradually dispersed and driven away, and that luminary stealthily shows itself by rising little by little. Thus men's eyes are slowly accustomed, by the gradual intensification of its rays, to bear its full orb. (5) In like manner Christ, the image of God and the very Son of God, was presented to the eyes of men only insofar as He was able to be seen. Thus the frailty and weakness of man's present condition is sustained, assisted, and fostered by Him, so that in time, by being accustomed to behold the Son, it may be able to see God the Father Himself as He is. Otherwise, human frailty would succumb to the sudden and unbearable brightness of God's majesty, and would be so overwhelmed that it could not possibly see God the Father, whom it has always desired to see. (6) Therefore, it is the Son who is seen here. But the Son of God is the Word of God: "The Word" of God "was made flesh and dwelt among us";⁶ and He is Christ. What in the world is the reason we hesitate to call Him God, when we have so many proofs that He is God?

(7) When Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, had been banished, from her home and put to flight, she was met at a spring of water on the road to Shur by an angel, who questioned her and learned the reason for her flight. She was advised to humble herself, with the hope that she would later bear the title of mother. Furthermore, the angel vowed and promised that the progeny of her womb would be numerous. Not only was Ishmael to be born of her but the angel also made known to her, among other things, the place of Ishmael's abode and described his manner of life.⁷ Now Scripture portrays this angel as both Lord and God, for He would not have promised the blessing of progeny if He had not been both angel and God. Let the heretics try to explain away this passage. (8) Was it the Father who was seen by Hagar, or not? For it was stated that He was God. Far be it from

⁶ John 1.14.

⁷ Gen. 16.7-12.

us to call God the Father an angel, lest He be subject to another, whose angel He would be. (9) But they will say that He was an angel. If He was an angel, how could He possibly be God since this name has never been given to angels? However, if we examine both sides of the question, truth itself drives us to this conclusion: we must acknowledge that He was the Son of God. Because He is of God, He is rightly called God, since He is the Son of God; and because He is subject to the Father and herald of the Father's will, he is proclaimed "Angel of Great Counsel."⁸ (10) Therefore, if this passage is not appropriate to the person of the Father, lest He be called an angel, nor to the person of an angel, lest He be called God, it does, however, suit the person of Christ, since He is not only God, inasmuch as He is the Son of God, but also an angel, inasmuch as He is the herald of the Father's dispensation.⁹ Heretics must realize that they are acting contrary to the Scriptures when they say they believe that Christ was also an angel, but do not want to admit that He is also the God who they read came frequently to visit the human race in the Old Testament.

(11) Moses also added that God appeared to Abraham "at the oak of Mamre, as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent at midday,"¹⁰ and though he saw three men, he addressed only one of them as Lord. When he had washed their feet and offered them bread baked on ashes with butter and an abundance of milk, he pleaded with them to remain as his guests and dine. (12) Later, he hears from them that he will be a father and learns that Sarah, his wife, will bear him a son.¹¹ He is informed of the destruction of the Sodomites and what they deserved to suffer. Finally, he learns that God has come down because of the ill repute of the Sodomites.¹² (13) If in

⁸ Isa. 9.6(5). This title found its way into the Christian liturgies—e.g., into the Roman rite as part of the introit for the third Mass of Christmas.

⁹ The argument is that Christ is both God and angel, a title which becomes only the Son of God. Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *The Trinity* (tr. by S. McKenna, FC 25.1954) pp. 111-22, 143-45, 534. Novatian argues from the original meaning of *angelus* in Greek—that of "messenger," "announcer."

¹⁰ Gen. 18.1.

¹¹ Cf. Gen. 18.2-10.

¹² Cf. Gen. 18.16-32.

this passage the heretics are of the opinion that it was the Father who was hospitably received at that time with the two angels, then the heretics believe that the Father is visible. If they say that it was an angel, then why is an angel addressed with the unusual title of God, since one of the three angels was called Lord? The only possible explanation that will render to God the Father His proper invisibility and to an angel His proper inferior position is to believe that no one but the Son of God, who is also God, was seen and hospitably received by Abraham. (14) As Abraham's guest, He was prefiguring in a mystery what He would one day be, when He would find Himself among the sons of Abraham. For He washed their feet¹³ to prove that it was really He; thus, He repaid Abraham's sons their claim to hospitality which their father had previously extended to Him. (15) And that there might not remain any doubt that He had been the guest of Abraham, it is written regarding the destruction of the Sodomites: "When the Lord poured down on Sodom and Gomorrah fire and sulphur from the Lord out of heaven."¹⁴ In fact, the prophet also says in the person of God: "I destroyed you, as the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah."¹⁵ (16) The Lord, therefore, destroyed Sodom; that is, God destroyed Sodom. In the destruction of the Sodomites, however, it was the Lord who rained fire from the Lord. This Lord was the God seen by Abraham.¹⁶ This God is Abraham's guest¹⁷ and was undoubtedly seen because He was touched. Now, since the Father, inasmuch as He is invisible, was assuredly not seen at that time, He who was seen and who was hospitably received and taken in was He who was wont to be seen and touched. This one then is the Son of God, "the Lord, who rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and sulphur from the Lord."¹⁸ But He is the Word of God: and the "Word" of God "was made flesh, and dwelt among us."¹⁹ This one then is Christ. (17) Therefore, it was

13 Cf. John 13.5.

14 Gen. 19.24. Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 13; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.6.

15 Amos 4.11.

16 Cf. Gen. 12.7; 18.1.

17 Cf. Gen. 18.3-8.

18 Gen. 19.24.

19 John 1.14.

not the Father who was the guest of Abraham but Christ. Nor was it the Father who was seen, but the Son; therefore, it was Christ who was seen. Consequently, Christ is both Lord and God, who could be seen by Abraham only because He was God, the Word, begotten of God the Father before Abraham even existed.²⁰

(18) Furthermore, Moses relates that this same angel, who is also God, visited and consoled Hagar when she fled from Abraham's home with her son. For when she had abandoned the child in the desert because there was no more water in the bottle and when the boy cried out, she mourned and wept aloud.²¹ "And God," says Scripture, "heard the voice of the boy from the place where he was."²²

(19) When Scripture had recounted that it was God who had heard the child's voice, Scripture added: "And the angel of the Lord called to Hagar from heaven."²³ Scripture calls Him an angel whom it has just called God and declares that He is Lord whom it had just represented as an angel. And He, being angel and God, promises Hagar even greater consolations, saying: "Do not fear, for I have heard the voice of the boy from the place where he was. Arise, take up the boy and hold him, for I will make him a great nation."²⁴ (20) Why does this angel, if he be only an angel, claim for himself the right to say: "For I will make him a great nation,"²⁵ since this kind of power undoubtedly belongs to God and cannot belong to an angel? Consequently, it proves that He who can do this is also God. To prove this very point, Scripture immediately adds: "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of spring water, and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the boy a drink, and God was with the child."²⁶ (21) Therefore He, who was with the child and opened the eyes of Hagar so that she might see the well of spring water and draw water to satisfy the child's urgent need of a drink, was God. On the other hand, if He who called to her from Heaven was God, then we

20 Cf. John 8.58.

21 Cf. Gen. 21.14-20.

22 Gen 21.17.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Gen. 21.17-18.

25 Gen. 21.18.

26 Gen. 21.19-20.

must realize that He who was called an angel is really not only an angel but God as well—even though earlier in the narrative, when He heard the cry of the boy, He was simply called God. (22) Now, although all this cannot be appropriately and suitably applied to the Father, who is only God, it can, however, be appropriately applied to Christ who has been proclaimed not only God but an angel also. It is quite evident, then, that it was not the Father who spoke to Hagar in the present passage but rather Christ, because He is God. The title of angel is also appropriate to Christ because He was made “the Angel of Great Counsel.”²⁷ He is an angel because He lays bare the heart of the Father,²⁸ as John declares. (23) For if John says that this Word, who lays bare the bosom of the Father, was also made flesh,²⁹ so that He could lay bare the heart of the Father, it follows that Christ is not only man but also an angel. And the Scriptures show not only that He is an angel but also that He is God. This is what we too believe. For, if we will not admit that it was Christ who then spoke to Hagar, we must either make an angel God or reckon God the Almighty Father among the angels.

Chapter 19

What will you reply if in another passage we read also that God was described as an angel? In fact, when Jacob was complaining to his wives, Leah and Rachel, of the injustice of their father and when he told them that now he desired to go and return to his native land, he pleaded on the authority of a dream of his and related that an angel of God had said to him in a dream:¹ “‘Jacob, Jacob.’ And I,” he continues, “said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘Lift up your eyes, and take note: the he-goats and rams are mating with the she-goats and the sheep, and are streaked with white, of divers colors, grizzled and speckled. For I have seen all that Laban has done to you. I am the God who appeared to you in the place of God, where you

27 Isa. 9.6(5).

28 Cf. John 1.18.

29 Cf. John 1.14.

1 Cf. Gen. 31.4-11.

anointed the memorial pillar in my behalf and made a vow to me. Now therefore arise, depart from this land, and go to the land of your birth and I shall be with you’ ”² (2) If the angel of God speaks these things to Jacob and the angel himself goes on to say: “I am the God who appeared to you in the place of God,”³ we immediately perceive that He is declared to be not only an angel but also God, since He says that Jacob’s vow was made to Him “in the place of God,”⁴ and does not say, “in my place.” It is therefore the place of God, and He who speaks is also God. (3) Furthermore, it is simply written: “in the place of God,”⁵ not “in the place of the angel and of God,” but only “of God.” Now He who promises these things is said to be God and angel. Consequently, there must be a distinction between Him who is called simply God and Him who is declared to be not simply God, but an angel as well. (4) Accordingly, if there is no other angel, whose authority can here be judged so great that he can claim to be God and attest that a vow had been made to him, except Christ alone—to whom a vow can be made not as to a mere angel but as to God—then it is quite evident that He cannot be regarded as the Father, but the Son who is both God and angel. (5) If He is Christ—as indeed He is—that man is in great danger who says that Christ is only a man or only an angel and denies Him the power due His Holy Name, a power He has frequently received according to the authority of the heavenly Scriptures,⁶ which repeatedly call Him both God and angel.

(6) To all these considerations, we can add that, just as divine Scripture repeatedly asserts that Christ is God and angel, so too does the same divine Scripture assert that He is both God and Man, when it explains what He was to be and represents in a figure, even at that early period, what nature He was to have in very substance. (7) Scripture recounts “Jacob remained alone; and a man wrestled with

2 Gen. 31.11-13.

3 Gen. 31.13.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 For Novatian Holy Scripture is: (1) “divine” (chs. 19.6, 24.6, 26.1); (2) “holy” (ch. 30.7); (3) “heavenly” (chs. 6.1, 19.5, 21.1, 23.6, 24.6, 30.16, 19).

him until the break of day. And he saw that he could not prevail against him, and he touched the broad part of Jacob's thigh while he struggled against him, and he with him, and he said to him, 'Let me go, for the morning star is rising.' And he said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' And he said, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And he said to him, 'Your name shall not be called Jacob any longer, but Israel shall be your name; for you have prevailed with God, and with men you are powerful.'"⁷ Furthermore, Scripture adds: "And Jacob called the name of that place Vision of God; for 'I have seen God face to face, and my life has been spared.' And the sun rose upon him and soon he passed the Vision of God; but he limped because of his thigh."⁸ (8) A man, Scripture says, wrestled with Jacob. If he is a mere man, who is he? Where did he come from? Why does he struggle and wrestle with Jacob? What had come between them? What had happened? What was the cause of so great a conflict and struggle as that? Moreover, why is it that Jacob proves to be the stronger even to the holding of the man with whom he was struggling? And why still, because the morning star was rising, is it he who, on that account, asks a blessing from him whom he held? It can only mean that this struggle was prefiguring that future contention between Christ and the sons of Jacob, which is said to have had its completion in the Gospel. (9) For Jacob's people struggled against this man and proved to be more powerful in the conflict, because they obtained the triumph of their own unrighteousness over Christ. Then, on account of the crime they had perpetrated, they began to limp very badly in the gait of their own faith and salvation, stumbling and slipping in their course. Though Jacob's people proved superior by their condemnation of Christ, they still need His mercy and still need His blessing. (10) Now, this man who wrestled with Jacob says to him, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name."⁹ And if Israel is a man who 'sees God,' then the Lord was showing in an elegant manner that he who wrestled with Jacob was not only

7 Gen. 32.25-28.

8 Gen. 32.31-32.

9 Gen. 32.28-29.

man, but also God. (11) Undoubtedly, Jacob saw God with whom he wrestled, though it was a man whom he held in his grip. That there might not remain any doubt, he himself gave the interpretation when he said: "For you have prevailed with God, and with men you are powerful."¹⁰ (12) That is why this same Jacob, understanding now the meaning of the prefiguration and realizing the authority of him with whom he had wrestled, called the name of the place where he had wrestled "Vision of God." (13) Furthermore, he added his reasons for giving his interpretation of God: "I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved."¹¹ For he saw God with whom he wrestled, as though he were wrestling with a man; but while as if victor he held the man, as an inferior¹² he asked a blessing of him, as one would of God. Thus he wrestled with God and with man. (14) Now if this struggle was then prefigured and has been actually fulfilled in the Gospel between Christ and Jacob's people—a struggle in which the people proved superior, yet were found to be inferior because of their guilt—who will hesitate to acknowledge that Christ in whom this figure of a struggle was fulfilled was not only Man but also God, when that very figure of a struggle seems to have proved that He is both God and Man?

(15) And yet, even after all these arguments, Scripture rightly does not cease to call an angel God, and God an angel. (16) When this same Jacob was about to bless Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, he placed his hands crosswise upon the heads of the boys¹³ and said: "May God who has nourished me from my youth even to this day, the angel who has delivered me from all evils, bless the boys."¹⁴ (17) So conclusively does he affirm that the same one whom he had called God is an angel that he does not hesitate towards the end of his sentence to place the person of whom he was speaking in the singular number, saying: "May He bless these boys."¹⁵ (18) For if he had meant the angel to be taken as a separate person, he would have

10 *Ibid.*

11 Gen. 32.31.

12 Cf. Heb. 7.7.

13 Cf. Gen. 48.14.

14 Gen. 48.15-16.

15 *Ibid.*

joined two persons together in the plural number; instead he used the singular number for one person in the blessing. Consequently, he wished the same person to be considered God and angel. (19) Although God the Father cannot be considered to be an angel, Christ can readily be taken to be both God and angel. By laying his hands crosswise on the heads of the boys,¹⁶ Jacob designated Christ as the author of this blessing, implying that Christ was their father. Accordingly, by the way in which he placed his hands, he was manifesting a figure and a future symbol of the Passion. (20) Just as no one hesitates to call Christ an angel, so too let no one hesitate to call Him also God, especially when he sees that He was invoked as both God and angel in the blessing of the boys through the mystery of His Passion, shown forth in the figure of the crossed hands.

Chapter 20

If any heretic obstinately resisting the truth would want to imply or even insist that an angel in the proper sense of the word must be understood in all these instances, he must also be defeated in this stand of his by the forces of truth. (2) Now if all things, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, which have been subjected to Christ,¹ even the very angels, with all possible creatures subject to Christ, are called gods,² then rightly Christ also is God. And yet any angel subject to Christ can be called god; furthermore, if this is said, it can even be said without blasphemy. Hence, it is indeed much more fitting that Christ, the very Son of God, should be proclaimed God. (3) For if an angel, who is subject to Christ, is declared to be a god, much more and more fittingly will Christ, to whom all angels are subject, be said to be God. In fact, it is not in accord with natural propriety to deny to the greater what has been granted to the lesser. So if an angel who is less than Christ, is, nevertheless, called a god, it

16 Cf. Gen. 48.14.

1 Cf. Matt. 28.18; Eph. 1.20-22; 1 Peter 3.22.

2 Cf. Ps. 81(82).6 (?). Only here in Sacred Scripture are angels called gods. Novatian argues as follows: All things, angels included, are subject to Christ. An angel, however, may be called a god; *a fortiori*, then, is Christ rightly called God.

follows quite readily that Christ, who is both greater and better than not just one angel but all of them, is to be called God. (4) Now if "God stood in the assembly of the gods and in their midst God judges the gods,"³ and Christ stood several times in the assembly, then Christ stood in the assembly as God judging the gods, to whom He says: "How long do you respect the persons of men?"⁴ He thereby accused the men of the assembly of judging unjustly. (5) Furthermore, if they who are reprov'd and blamed seem for some reason or other to acquire this name without blasphemy, so that they can be called gods, much more, assuredly, shall He be regarded as God who is said not only to have stood as the God of gods, but to have been revealed to us by the authority of the same passage, as judging and passing sentence on gods. (6) Now if they who "fall like one of the princes"⁵ are, nevertheless, called gods, much more shall He be called God who not only does not fall as one of the princes, but even overcomes the very author and prince of wickedness. (7) Why in the world, after reading that this name was also given to Moses, when it is stated: "I have made you as God to Pharaoh,"⁶ should they deny this title to Christ who we find has been constituted not a god to Pharaoh, but rather the Lord and God of all creation? (8) And in the former case the name is given with a qualification in the latter unreservedly; in the former case, by measure, in the latter, beyond all measure whatever ("for the Father," says Scripture, "does not give by measure to the Son, for the Father loves the Son");⁷ in the former case, for a time; in the latter, without reference to time. In fact, Christ received the power of the Divine Name, not only over all things but for all time. (9) Now

3 Ps. 81(82).1.

4 Ps. 81(82).2.

5 Ps. 81(82).7. The older commentators (Novatian, Eusebius of Caesarea, Theodoret, Origen, Hesychius, Augustine, and others) refer the expression "one of the princes" to Satan. Modern commentators, however, think that it means simply "like any prince."

6 Exod. 7.1.

7 John 3.34-35. Just as man in loving God must love Him without measure (St. Bernard, *On the Love of God* 1.1, 6.16), so God Himself loves without measure.

if he who received power over one man, notwithstanding the limited power given him, is without hesitation granted the name of God, how much more shall we believe that He who has power even over Moses has received the authority of the name given to Him?

Chapter 21

I could have very well sifted through the statements of all the Heavenly Scriptures and, if I may use the expression, produced a veritable forest of texts on this question of Christ's divinity. However, I did not intend to speak against this particular heresy, but rather to explain briefly the Rule of Truth regarding the person of Christ. (2) Although I must hasten on to other matters, I do not think that I ought to omit what the Lord expressed in the Gospel as a mysterious indication of His majesty, when He said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"¹ or when He stated in another place, and in a different context: "I have power to lay down My life and take it up again, for I have received this command from the Father."² (3) Now, who is this who says that He has power to lay down His life or that He can restore His life again, because He has received this command from the Father? Or who says that He can raise up again and rebuild the ruined temple of His body? He can be no other than the Word who is of the Father, who is with the Father,³ through whom "all things were made, and without whom nothing was made."⁴ He is the imitator of the Father's works and mighty deeds,⁵ the "image of the invisible God,"⁶ who "came down from heaven,"⁷ who "bore witness to that which He has seen and heard,"⁸ who did not come to do His own Will but rather to do the Will of the Father,⁹ by whom He had been sent for this very pur-

1 John 2.19.

2 John 10.18.

3 John 1.1-2.

4 John 1.3.

5 Cf. John 5.19.

6 Col. 1.15.

7 John 3.31.

8 John 3.32.

9 Cf. John 6.38-39.

pose. He was constituted the "Angel of Great Counsel"¹⁰ that He might reveal to us the laws of heavenly mysteries. He, the Word made flesh, dwelt among us.¹¹ He, therefore, is this Christ who, as one of us, has been clearly demonstrated to be not only Man inasmuch as He is the Son of Man, but also God because He is the Son of God.

(4) Now, if Christ is called by the Apostle "the firstborn of all creatures,"¹² how could He be the firstborn of all creatures unless—in virtue of His divinity—He came forth, as the Word from the Father before every creature? But if the heretics do not interpret the above passage in this manner, they will be compelled to prove that Christ, as man, is the firstborn of all creatures, something they have not been able to do. (5) Therefore, either He is before every creature, so as to be the firstborn of all creatures (then He is not merely a man because man is after every created thing) or else He is merely a man and consequently after every created thing. (6) And how is He the firstborn of all creatures, if not by virtue of His being that divine Word that is before every creature? Therefore, the firstborn of all creatures is made flesh and dwells among us—that is, He assumes this humanity which is after all creation—and thus, with it and in it, dwells among us, so that neither is humanity taken away from Christ nor is divinity denied Him. (7) For if He is merely before every creature, humanity is taken away from Him. On the other hand, if He is only man, His divinity, which is before every creature, is done away with. Both then are united in Christ, both are conjoined, both are linked together. (8) This is rightly so, since there is something in Him that surpasses every creature, inasmuch as the union of the divinity and the humanity seems to be secured in Him. For this reason, He who is declared to have been made "the Mediator between God and man"¹³ is found to have associated in Himself both God and Man.

(9) And when the same Apostle says of Christ: "He, having put off

10 Isa. 9.6.

11 John 1.14.

12 Col. 1.15.

13 1 Tim. 2.5.

the flesh, dishonored the Powers, openly triumphing over them in Himself,"¹⁴ certainly he did not intend that the phrase, "having put off the flesh," should have no meaning at all. On the contrary, he intended it to mean that He put on the flesh again in His Resurrection. (10) Let the heretics, then, find out for themselves who it is that puts off and again puts on the flesh. For we know that it was the Word of God who put on the substance of flesh and that this selfsame Word divested Himself of the very same material of His body, which he took again in His Resurrection, and put on anew, as though it were a garment. (11) If Christ had been only a man, He could neither have divested Himself of nor clothed Himself with humanity since no one is ever divested of or clothed with himself. Whatever is taken away from or put on by someone must of necessity be something other than the person himself. (12) Consequently, it was assuredly the Word of God who put off the flesh and in His Resurrection put it on again. He discarded it because He had put it on in His Nativity. So in Christ it is God who is clothed, and it must also be God who was divested because He who is clothed must likewise be divested. He, then, puts on and puts off humanity, as though His body were a woven tunic. Therefore it was the Word of God, as we have already stated, who is found to have at one time put on and at another time to have put off the flesh. (13) He even foretold this in the blessing: "He shall wash His garment in wine, and His clothing in the blood of the grape."¹⁵ (14) If in Christ the garment is His flesh and the clothing His body, then one may ask, who it is whose body is His clothing and His flesh His garment. It is quite evident to us that the flesh was the garment and the body was the clothing of the Word who washed the substance of His body and the matter of His flesh in the blood, that is, in wine, cleansing by His

14 Col. 2.15; cf. Hilary, *De Trin.* 1.13 (tr. McKenna, FC 25.13-14). The literal meaning of the text is that God despoiled or disarmed the vile angels (Principalities and Powers) of their power by His death on the Cross. Novatian and, in general, the Latin Fathers interpret the passage to mean "Christ stripped Himself of His body" by His death on the Cross and clothed Himself with humanity again when He arose from the dead.

15 Gen. 49.11. Verses 1-27 of this chapter sometimes carry the heading "Jacob's Blessings"; here Jacob foretells the future of his sons. Verse 11 relates to Judah.

Passion that humanity He had taken upon Himself.¹⁶ (15) Therefore, inasmuch as He is washed, He is man, because the garment that is washed is flesh; but He who washes it is the Word of God, who, in order to wash the garment, was made the wearer of the garment. (16) Accordingly, He is declared to be Man by that substance which was assumed that it might be washed, just as He who washed it is shown to be God, by the authority of the Word.

Chapter 22

Although we find ourselves hurrying on to another part of the discussion, we cannot omit that well-known passage of the Apostle: "Who though He was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to death, the death of the Cross. Therefore God also has exalted Him exceedingly, and has bestowed upon Him the name that is above every name; so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father."¹ (2) The Apostle says: "Who though He was in the form of God."² If Christ, then, were only man, He would have been referred to as in the image of God, not as in the form of God. For we know that man was made to the image, not according to the form of God.³ (3) Who, then, is this, who was made, as we have said, in the form of God? An angel? But nowhere in Scripture do we read about angels in the form of God, simply because He alone is the first and of noble birth before all others: the Son of God, the Word of God, the Imitator of all His Father's works.⁴ Inasmuch as He also works as His Father does,⁵ He is, as we have said, in the form of God the Father. (4) Rightly, then,

16 Cf. Hippolytus, *De antichristo* 11; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.40.

1 Phil. 2.6-11.

2 Phil. 2.6.

3 Gen. 1.26-27.

4 Cf. John 5.19.

5 John 5.17.

has He been declared to be in the form of God, because He is above all things, holds divine authority over every creature, and is God after the likeness of His Father. However, He received this from His own Father, that He might be both God and Lord of all and God according to the form of God the Father, begotten and brought forth from Him. (5) Therefore, though "He was in the form of God, He did not think it robbery to be equal to God."⁶ For though He was ever mindful that He was God of God the Father, He never compared or ranked Himself with God the Father, knowing that He is of His Father; and this very thing (that He is) He had, because the Father had given it to Him. Hence, not only before He took upon Himself the flesh but even after He had taken a body, and again, after His Resurrection, He rendered and still renders perfect obedience to His Father in all things. (6) Consequently, this proves that He never regarded His divinity as a means of unlawfully arrogating to Himself equality with God the Father. On the contrary, obedient and subject to His Father's every command and will, He was even content to take upon Himself the form of a slave—that is, to become man.⁷ He took upon Himself by His birth the substance of flesh and of the body which fell to His lot from the bondage incurred by the transgressions of His forefathers and according to His human nature.

At that time, He also emptied Himself, for He did not refuse to take upon Himself the human frailty of human existence. (7) Had he been born a mere man, He would never, because of that, have been emptied. Man, by being born, is not emptied but rather acquires something. When he begins to be, he acquires what he could not have had when He did not exist; as a result, he is not emptied, as we have said, but rather acquires and is enriched. (8) And if Christ is emptied, since He is born, taking the form of a slave, how, then, is He merely a man? Of Christ it would have been more correct to say that He was enriched when He was born, not emptied, for the simple

⁶ Phil. 2.6.

⁷ Christ is sinless, but by His Incarnation He became part of a sinful race and bore the burden of our sins.

reason that the majesty of the Divine Word, condescending for the moment to take upon itself humanity and not exercising itself in its powers, lowers and abases itself for a time, while bearing the humanity that it has taken upon itself. (9) He empties Himself when He condescends to affronts and insults, when He hears blasphemies and suffers unbecoming things.

His abasement, however, bears excellent fruit, (10) since He received a "name which is above every name,"⁸ which name indeed we know can only be the name of God. In fact, since God alone is above all things, it follows that that name is above all things, which belongs to Him who is above all things, namely God. It is therefore, that name which is above every name, which name consequently must assuredly belong to Him who, though he had been in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God. (11) For if Christ were not also God, every knee of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth would not bend at His name.⁹ Neither things visible nor those invisible, nor creation itself would be subject and subservient to a man, since they would be mindful of the fact that they existed before man. (12) Christ, then, is said to be in the form of God. He is shown to have emptied Himself in His Nativity according to the flesh.¹⁰ He is said to have received from His Father a name that is above every name. It is clear to all that every knee of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth bends and bows at His name; furthermore, it is stated that this redounds to the glory of God the Father.¹¹ Consequently, the fact that He "became obedient" to the Father "unto death, even to the death of the cross"¹² does not mean that He is only man. On the contrary, if we consider the foregoing proofs which loudly proclaim Christ's divinity, we find that the Lord Christ Jesus proves to be also God. The heretics do not accept this truth.

⁸ Phil. 2.9.

⁹ Cf. Phil. 2.10.

¹⁰ Cf. Phil. 2.6-7.

¹¹ Cf. Phil. 2.9-11.

¹² Phil. 2.8.

Chapter 23

In this chapter I will permit myself the liberty of marshaling my arguments even from the point of view of other heretics. It is indeed a very efficacious kind of proof that is taken even from one's adversary to demonstrate the truth by means of the very enemies of truth.¹ (2) The Scriptures so clearly teach that Christ is also God that many heretics,² deeply moved by the reality and the grandeur of His divinity, stressed His glories to such an extent that they did not hesitate to declare (or at least were of the opinion) that He was not the Son, but God the Father Himself. (3) Though this opinion of theirs is contrary to the truth of the Scriptures, it is, nevertheless, a weighty and excellent argument for the divinity of Christ. He is so indisputably God—that is, as Son of God, born of God—that many heretics, as we have said, took Him to be God in such a manner that they thought that He must be called the Father, not the Son. (4) Let the heretics, then, decide whether He is God or not, bearing in mind, however, that His divine majesty has so greatly moved certain people that, as we stated above, they already were of the opinion that He was indeed God the Father Himself. They acknowledge, without due moderation and restraint, the divinity in Christ because they are compelled to do so by Christ's incontestable divinity. Hence, though they read in Scripture that He is the Son, they think that He is the Father because they readily perceive that the Son is God. (5) Other heretics³ cling with such tenacity to the evident divinity of Christ that they say He was without flesh. Thus, they have stripped Him entirely of the humanity He took upon Himself, because they thought that they would reduce the power of the divine name in Him if they were to associate, in any way, a human birth with Him. (6) We do not approve of this; nevertheless, we can use it as an argument to prove that Christ is so indisputably God that some heretics have done away with His humanity and think that He is only

1 Cf. Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.

2 The Sabellians, already referred to in ch. 12.

3 Namely, those attacked by Tertullian in *De carne Christi*.

God, while others believe that He is God the Father Himself. Since reason and the harmony existing between the various parts of the Heavenly Scriptures show that Christ is God—but as the Son of God—and since the Son of Man has been assumed by God, we must believe that He is also Man. (7) For if He was coming to man so that He might be “the Mediator between God and man,”⁴ He had to be with man. The Word had to become flesh⁵ that He might unite in Himself the alliance between earthly and heavenly things by incorporating the pledges of both parties in Himself, thus uniting God with man and man with God.⁶ Accordingly, the Son of God could become the Son of Man by taking flesh, and the Son of Man could become the Son of God by the reception of the Word of God. (8) This most profound and recondite mystery,⁷ destined for the salvation of the human race before the ages,⁸ had its fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and Man, so that the human race might be brought through Him to the enjoyment of eternal salvation.

Chapter 24

Now the origin of the heretics' error, I believe, is that they do not think there is a distinction between the Son of God and the Son of Man. For if a distinction were made, it would not be difficult to prove that Jesus Christ is both Man and God. (2) They would have it appear that one and the self-same man—that is, the Son of Man—is also the Son of God, so that the man and the flesh and that self-same frail bodily substance is said to be the Son of God. Therefore, since no distinction is made between the Son of Man and the Son of God and since they claim that the Son of Man Himself is the Son of God,

4 1 Tim. 2.5.

5 Cf. John 1.14.

6 The idea is that man and God have entered into a mutual engagement, of which the Incarnation is the guarantee.

7 Cf. Eph. 1.9.

8 Cf. 2 Tim. 1.9.

they assert that Christ, as a mere man, is likewise the Son of God.

(3) They are endeavoring to exclude by this argument of theirs the Scriptural passages: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"¹ and "You shall call His name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, God with us."²

(4) They bring forward and allege in support of their argument what is related in the Gospel according to Luke, by virtue of which they endeavor to assert not the truth as it really is but only as they desire it to be: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; therefore also the holy thing to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."³ (5) If, therefore, reply the heretics, the angel of God says to Mary "that holy thing which shall be born of thee," then the substance of flesh and body is from Mary. Hence, the angel declared that this substance—that is, this holy thing that was born of her—is the Son of God. The man himself, they say, and that very flesh of His body, that thing that is said to be holy, is itself the Son of God so that when Scripture mentions "the holy thing," we should understand it to mean Christ the man, the Son of Man. When Scripture sets before us the Son of God, we ought to understand not God, but man.

(6) Divine Scripture, however, uncovers and refutes with ease the deceits and the stratagems of the heretics. For if the wording were only as follows: "The Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," perhaps we would have had to contend with them in another way. We would have had to look for other arguments and to select other weapons with which to overcome their snares and charlatanries. But since Scripture itself, which abounds in heavenly integrity, exonerates itself from the calumnies of those heretics, we can readily rely upon what has been written and without hesitation overcome their errors. (7) In fact, as we have already explained, Scripture did not state: "therefore that holy thing to be born of thee," but added a conjunction

¹ John 1.14.

² Isa. 7.14; Matt. 1.23.

³ Luke 1.35, a verse echoed through the remainder of the chapter.

and stated: "therefore also that holy thing to be born of thee." So Scripture clearly shows that this holy thing that is born of her—that is, that substance of flesh and body—is not primarily but subsequently and secondarily the Son of God. Primarily, however, the Son of God is the Word of God, incarnate through that Spirit of whom the angel relates, "The spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee."

(8) This is the genuine Son of God, who is of God Himself. Inasmuch as He assumes that holy thing and joins to Himself the Son of Man, He not only seizes Him and draws Him over to Himself but also bestows upon Him and makes Him by His connection and associated permixtion the Son of God, which He was not by nature. Thus, the pre-eminence of that name, "Son of God," resides in the Spirit of the Lord who descended and came; whereas the sequela of that name is to be found in the Son of God and Man. In consequence [of such a union] this Son of Man rightly became the Son of God, although He is not primarily the Son of God. (9) Accordingly, the angel, aware of that arrangement and making known the providential order of the mystery, did not confuse everything so as not to leave any vestige of a distinction. He made that distinction when he announced: "Therefore also that holy thing to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." For if he had not allotted that partition [of natures] with its due balance but had left it in hazy confusion, he would have undoubtedly given the heretics an opportunity to declare that the Son of Man, as man, is the same Son both of God and Man. (10) However, he explained things in detail and clearly made known the providential order and meaning of so great a mystery when he said: "And that holy thing to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"; hence he proved that the Son of God descended and took to Himself the Son of Man and made Him, in consequence [of that union], the Son of God. For the Son of God associated and joined the Son of Man to Himself so that, while the Son of Man adheres in His Nativity to the Son of God, by that very permixtion He holds that as pledged and secured which of His own nature He could not possess. (11) And thus by the voice of an angel a distinction which the heretics reject was made between the Son of God and

the Son of Man. This distinction maintains, however, the proper association [of the two] and constrains them to understand that Christ, the Man, the Son of Man, is also the Son of God and to accept as Man the Son of God—that is, the Word of God who is God, according to the Scriptures. Therefore let them acknowledge that Christ Jesus the Lord, fastened together from both, so to speak, woven and worked together from both, and associated in the same agreement of both natures in the clasp of a mutual bond, is God and Man, as the truth of Scripture itself declares.

Chapter 25

Well then, say the heretics, if Christ is not only Man but also God, and Scripture says that Christ died for us and rose again, surely Scripture is teaching us to believe that God died. If God cannot die and Christ is said to have died, Christ cannot be God because God cannot be understood to have died. (2) If they ever could understand or had ever understood what they read, they would undoubtedly have never expressed themselves in such a hazardous manner. But the folly of error is always reckless, and it is not unusual for those who have abandoned the true faith to stoop to foolhardy things. (3) If Scripture had declared that Christ was only God and there was no association of human frailty traceable in Him, then their twisted syllogism would have had some force here: "If Christ is God, and Christ died, then God died." (4) Since Scripture holds Him up to be not only God but also Man, as we have frequently made clear, it follows that what is immortal must be held to have remained uncorrupted. For who does not perceive that the Divinity is incapable of suffering and that human frailty is certainly capable of suffering? (5) Because one readily perceives that in Christ there is a permixtion¹ and association of that which is God and of that which is Man—for "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"²—who cannot discern by himself, without a teacher or interpreter, that

1 The inconfusion of the two natures in Christ was already most concisely formulated by Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 27.

2 John 1.14.

what is God in Christ did not die, but what is Man in Him did die? (6) Why marvel that the divinity of Christ cannot die and that the substance of the flesh alone perishes, when we realize that even in other men, who are not only flesh but flesh and soul, the flesh alone suffers the inroads of dissolution and death; whereas the soul, which is not liable to the laws of dissolution and death, remains obviously uncorrupted? (7) This is what our Lord Himself said when He exhorted us to suffer martyrdom and to despise all human power: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."³ (8) Now if the immortal soul cannot be killed or slain in anyone even though the body and flesh alone can be slain, then how much more, you may be sure, was it absolutely impossible for the Word of God, who is God, to be slain in Christ, when His flesh and body alone were slain. (9) For if the soul in every man possesses this noblesse of immortality, so that it cannot be slain, much more does the noblesse of the Word of God claim this power of not being able to be slain. If the power of men fails to destroy the sacred power of God, and human cruelty fails to slay the soul, much more must it fail to slay the Word of God. If the soul itself, which was created through the Word of God, cannot be slain by men, much more readily should we believe that the Word of God cannot be destroyed. (10) And if man's bloody violence against his fellowman can do no more than kill the body, a fortiori, you can be sure it will be unable to do more than slay, in like manner, only the body of Christ. Therefore we conclude that only the Man in Christ was slain and that it is quite evident that the Word was not thereby subjected to mortality. (11) Certainly it is evident that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were obviously only men, are alive: "For all these," says the Lord, "live unto"⁴ God, and death, which decomposed their bodies, could not destroy their souls. Death could exercise its power over their bodies but could not exercise it over their souls. For we must distinguish in them what was mortal and therefore died, and what was immortal in them and consequently, as we know, could not have been extinguished. Precisely for that reason does Scripture declare and affirm that they live unto God. Now, if this is the case with mere men, then

3 Matt. 10.28.

4 Luke 20.38.

how much more, of course, was death in Christ powerless against the divinity of the Word, even though it was able to prevail against the mere matter of His body. For the power of death is broken where the might of immortality intervenes.

Chapter 26

Since the sacred authority of the Divine Scripture affirms that Christ is not only Man but also God, other heretics¹ use this as a pretext to come forth with a scheme to undermine the very foundation of our devotion to Christ. They want to show that Christ is God the Father by the very fact that He is declared to be not only Man but also God. (2) They express themselves in this manner: Scripture teaches that there is one God. But Christ is God. Therefore, say the heretics, if the Father and Christ are the one God, Christ will be called the Father. In this syllogism they were proved to be in error, not knowing Christ, but rather favoring the mere sound of a name. For they want Him not to be the Second Person after the Father, but the Father Himself. (3) Since we can readily refute them, we shall say just a few words. For who does not acknowledge that the Second Person after the Father is the Son, when he reads what was said by the Father to the Son in view of this relationship: "Let us make men to Our image and likeness";² and after these words it is related: "And God made man, according to the image of God He made him"?³ (4) Or when he holds in his hands the text: "The Lord poured down on Sodom and Gomorrah fire and sulphur from the Lord out of heaven"?⁴ (5) Or when he reads [the words addressed] to Christ: "You are my Son; this day I have begotten You. Ask of Me and I will give You the Gentiles for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession"?⁵ (6) Or when even that

1 The Patripassians.

2 Gen. 1.26.

3 Gen. 1.27.

4 Gen. 19.24.

5 Ps. 2.7-8.

beloved writer says: "The Lord said to My Lord: 'Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool' "?⁶ (7) Or when he opens the prophecies of Isaiah and finds it written: "Thus says the Lord to Christ my Lord"?⁷ (8) Or when he reads: "I did not come down from heaven to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me"?⁸ (9) Or when he finds it written: "For He who sent Me is greater than I"?⁹ (10) Or when he considers the passage: "I go to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God"?¹⁰ (11) Or when he finds, among other texts, the statement: "But in your Law it is written that the witness of two persons is true; I bear witness to Myself, and He who sent Me, the Father, bears witness to Me"?¹¹ (12) Or when a voice from heaven resounds: "I have glorified [it], and I will glorify [it again]"?¹² (13) Or when Peter answered and said: "You are the Son of the living God"?¹³ (14) Or when the Lord Himself confirmed the mystery of this revelation, and said: "You are blessed, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven"?¹⁴ (15) Or when Christ Himself utters: "Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with You before the world existed"?¹⁵ (16) Or when the same Christ says: "Father, I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people who stand round, I spoke, that they may believe that You sent Me"?¹⁶ (17) Or when Christ Himself makes a pronouncement on the Rule [of Truth] and says: "Now this is everlasting life,

6 Ps. 109(110).1.

7 Isa. 45.1.

8 John 6.38.

9 Isa. 45.1. Along with many other Greek and Latin writers, Novatian erred by reading in the Greek *kyriōi* ("to the Lord") instead of *kyrōi* ("to Cyrus") and interpreting *christōi* as "Christ" rather than "anointed."

10 John 6.38.

11 John 14.28.

12 John 20.17.

13 John 8.17-18.

14 John 12.28.

15 Matt. 16.16.

16 Matt. 16.17.

17 John 17.5.

18 John 11.42.

that they may know You, the one true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ. I have glorified You on earth; I have accomplished the work that You have given Me"? ¹⁷ (18) Or again when He asserts and declares: "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father"? ¹⁸ (19) Or when both the apostles and the prophets affirm that He sits at the right hand¹⁹ of the Father? (20) Now I should have quite a wearisome task, if I were to try to gather together all the possible passages bearing on this question. For throughout the Divine Scripture of the Old, as well as the New Testament, He is shown to us as born of the Father, one through whom "all things were made, and without whom nothing was made,"²⁰ who has ever been obedient to the Father and still obeys. He is also revealed to us as having power over all things, power, however, that has been given, that has been granted and conferred upon Him by His own Father. (21) What could make it more evident that He is not the Father but the Son than the fact that He is set before us as obedient to God the Father? If we were to believe otherwise—that He is the Father—then we would have to say that Christ is subject to another God the Father.

Chapter 27

Since the heretics frequently place before us that passage which states: "I am the Father are one [*unum*],"¹ we shall refute them again with equal facility also on this count. (2) For if Christ were the Father, as the heretics think, He should have said: "I, the Father, am one [*unus*]." But when He says "I" and then introduces the Father, by saying: "I and the Father," He thereby distinguishes and separates the individuality of His own Person, viz. that of the Son, from the

¹⁷ John 17.3-4.

¹⁸ Matt. 11.27; Luke 10.22.

¹⁹ Cf. Ps. 109(110).1; Mark 16.19; Heb. 1.3.

²⁰ John 1.3.

¹ John 10.30. Latin provides three forms of the word for "one" in the nominative case singular: *unus* (masculine), *unum* (neuter), and (not here relevant) *una* (feminine). Novatian's argument in this passage reposes upon this distinction.

authority of the Father, not only as regards the mere sound of the name [Son] but also in regard to the order of power in the divine economy. He could have said: "I the Father," if He were conscious of the fact that He Himself was the Father. (3) Furthermore, since He said "one" [*unum*], let the heretics realize that He did not say "one" [*unus*]. For "one" in the neuter gender denotes harmony of fellowship, not unity of person. He is said to be "one" [*unum*], and not "one" [*unus*], because there is no reference to number but to association of fellowship with another. (4) And in fact He goes on to say "we are," not "I am," to show that there are two Persons, precisely through saying "We are" and "the Father." When He says "one" [*unum*], He is referring to the harmony, the identity of judgment, the association of love itself existing between them, so that the Father and the Son are rightly one through harmony, through love, and through affection. (5) And because He is of the Father, whatever be the nature of the Father. He is the Son; however, the distinction remains, so that He is not the Father who is the Son, because He is not the Son who is the Father. Nor would He have added "We are," if He had been mindful of the fact that He, the one and only Father, had become the Son.

(6) In fact, the apostle Paul was aware of this harmonious unity along with its corresponding distinction of persons. For he says, in writing to the Corinthians: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God has given the growth. This means that neither he who plants nor he who waters is of any special account, only God, who gives the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one [*unum*]."² (7) Who, then, does not see that Apollos is one person, Paul another, and that Apollos and Paul are not equally one and the same person? He declares that the functions of each are distinct: for he who plants is one person, and he who waters is another. The apostle Paul, however, offered these two men for consideration, of the faithful, not because each of them constitutes one [*unus*] individual person but because they are one [*unum*]. Apollos is indeed one person, Paul another, as far as the distinction of persons is concerned; but the

² 1 Cor. 3.6-8.

two are one [*unum*] <with regard to the harmony existing between them>. (8) In fact, when two persons are of one mind, one truth, one faith, of one and the same religion, one also in the fear of God, the two are really one, even though they are two persons. They are the same, inasmuch as they are of the same mind. (9) For those who are separated by reason of personality are brought together again because of religion. Although they are not identically the same persons, yet as long as they are of the same mind, they are the same thing; and though they are two persons, they are one inasmuch as they have fellowship in the faith, even though they are different as regards their respective persons.

(10) When, finally, Jewish perversity was so moved at these words of our Lord³ and vehemently inflamed with anger that the people boldly rushed to take up stones, shouting: "Not for a good work do we stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God,"⁴ the Lord made a distinction when He explained to them precisely in what manner He had said or wished it to be understood that He was God. He said: "Do you say of Him whom the Father has made holy and sent into this world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"⁵ (11) Here again He said that He had a Father. He is therefore the Son, not the Father; for He would have acknowledged Himself to be the Father had He had it in mind that He was the Father. (12) Furthermore, He declares that He has been made holy by His Father. Since, then, He receives sanctification from the Father, He is less than the Father. Because He is less than the Father, He is consequently <not the Father>, but the Son. For if He had been the Father, He would have given, not received sanctification. By openly acknowledging that He receives sanctification from the Father, He proves, by the very fact that He receives sanctification from the Father, that He is less than the Father; consequently He has already demonstrated that He is the Son, not the Father. (13) Furthermore, He says that He has been sent, so that the Lord Christ, coming as He did through obedience, might prove,

³ Viz. "I and the Father are one" (John 10.30).

⁴ John 10.33.

⁵ John 10.36.

having been sent, that He was not the Father but the Son, who certainly would have been the sender if He had been the Father. The Father, however, was not sent, lest the Father, by being sent, would prove to be subject to another god. (14) After all that has been said and done, He still adds what should completely settle every doubt and put an end to the whole misleading controversy. He says, in fact, toward the latter part of His discourse: "Do you say, 'You blaspheme' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"⁶ If, therefore, the Lord clearly testifies that He is the Son, not the Father, it is a sign of great rashness and much madness to engage in controversy over the divinity and over religion, contrary to the testimony of the Lord Christ Himself, and to say that Christ Jesus is the Father, when one observes that He has already proved that He is not the Father, but the Son.

Chapter 28

I will also add that famous passage the heretic holds as dear as the apple of his own eye, even though he has lost the eye of truth and light; and in so doing I will force him to acknowledge the complete blindness of his error. (2) Again and again they bring before me the very same objection, namely, that it is written: "Have I been so long a time with you, and you do not know Me? Philip, he who sees Me sees also the Father."¹ (3) Now let the heretic learn what he does not understand. Philip is blamed, and rightly and deservedly so, because he had said: "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us."² For when had he ever heard from Christ or been taught that Christ was the Father? On the contrary, he had frequently heard and had often been taught that He was the Son, not that He was the Father, (4) When the Lord said: "If you have known Me, you have also known My Father; and henceforth you know Him, and you have seen Him,"³ He did not say it in such a manner as to wish

⁶ *Ibid.*

¹ John 14.9.

² John 14.8.

³ John 14.7.

Himself to be taken for the Father. Rather, it means that the man who completely and perfectly, with full faith and devotion, has drawn near the Son of God shall certainly through the Son in whom he so believes, attain to the Father and shall see Him. (5) "For no one," He says, "can come to the Father but through Me."⁴ Therefore not only shall he come to God the Father and know the Father Himself but he also ought to keep himself in such a state of mind and anticipation as though he already knew the Father and saw Him as well.

(6) For Divine Scripture often mentions things that have not yet been done as already done, because they are eventually going to be done; and it foretells things which are certainly about to happen, not as though they are going to happen in the future, but rather as though they had already happened.⁵ (7) In fact, though Christ had not yet been born in the time of Isaiah the prophet, Isaiah stated: "For a child is born to us."⁶ And although Mary had not yet been approached, he said: "And I went to the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son."⁷ (8) Though Christ had not yet made known the divine secrets of the Father, Isaiah stated: "And His name will be called the Angel of Great Counsel."⁸ (9) He had not yet suffered, and the prophet declared: "He was led as a sheep to the throat-cutter."⁹ (10) As yet there had been no Cross, and he stated: "All the day long have I stretched out My hands to an unbelieving people."¹⁰ (11) He had not as yet, in scorn, been proffered drink, and the prophet says: "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."¹¹ (12) Though He had not yet been divested, he declared: "Upon My vesture they cast lots; and they numbered My bones; they pierced My hands and feet."¹² (13) For divine Scripture, which

4 John 14.6.

5 The prophet, seeing future events vividly portrayed in his prophetic vision, describes them as though they were present or already past; hence, he makes use of the present and the past, instead of the future.

6 Isa. 9.6.

7 Isa. 8.3; Novatian's text shows the third person ("he went").

8 Isa. 9.6.

9 Isa. 53.7.

10 Isa. 65.2.

11 Ps. 68(69).22.

12 Ps. 21(22).19, 18, 17.

foresees all, speaks of things which it knows will take place in the future, as already done. And it speaks of things as already accomplished which it regards as future, because they undoubtedly shall come to pass. (14) In the present passage, therefore, the Lord stated: "Henceforth you do know Him and you have seen Him."¹³ He said that whoever followed the Son would see the Father. He did not mean that the Son Himself was the Father, now seen, but that whoever was willing to follow Him and become His disciple would obtain the reward of being able to see the Father. (15) He is also the image of God the Father; therefore this truth can be added to the others: As the Father works, so does the Son also; and the Son is the imitator of all His Father's works.¹⁴ Accordingly, every man can feel that, in a sense, he has already seen the Father, inasmuch as he sees Him who always imitates the invisible Father in all His works.

(16) Furthermore, if Christ is the Father Himself, how is it that He immediately goes on to say: "He who believes in Me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater than these he shall do because I am going to the Father"?¹⁵ (17) And then He adds: "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate."¹⁶ (18) After saying all these things, He even adds that well-known passage: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and my Father loves him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."¹⁷ (19) Nor did He omit that other passage: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send, He will teach you and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you."¹⁸ (20) He places before us still another passage to prove that He is the Son and therefore says: "If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."¹⁹ (21) What will the heretic reply when He also adds that passage: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-dresser. Every

13 John 14.7.

14 Cf. John 5.19, 17.

15 John 14.12.

16 John 14.15-16.

17 John 14.23.

18 John 14.26.

19 John 14.28.

branch in Me that bears no fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He cleanses, that it may bear more fruit"? ²⁰ (22) Still He presses on and adds: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."²¹ (23) He yet heaps sentence upon sentence and says: "But I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father, I have made known to you."²² (24) And on the top of the heap He even adds: "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."²³

(25) The Lord, therefore, would never have used all these arguments, especially after having already given so many that clearly bear witness that He is not the Father but the Son, if He had been mindful that He was the Father or wished that He be considered the Father. His sole purpose in these words was to make it clear to us that every man should henceforth account it to be the same thing to see the image of God the Father through the Son, as if he had seen the Father. Every man, by believing in the Son, exercises himself in the contemplation of the Image, that he may advance and grow even to the perfect contemplation of God the almighty Father, after he has grown accustomed to see the divinity in the Image. Furthermore, he who has imbued his mind and spirit with this truth and has believed that it will be so without exception has already, in a sense, seen the Father, whom he shall see hereafter. Already has he here on earth, as though it were in his grasp, what he knows for certain he will one day have.

(26) Furthermore, if Christ had been the Father Himself, why did He promise, as though it were a future reward, what He had already bestowed and granted? (27) When He says: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God,"²⁴ we find Him promising the contem-

²⁰ John 15.1-2.

²¹ John 15.9-10.

²² John 15.15.

²³ John 15.21.

²⁴ Matt. 5.8.

plation and vision of the Father. Therefore, He had not yet granted it; for why would He promise it, if He had already granted it? He would have given it, were He the Father; for He was being seen and had been touched. (28) When Christ Himself is seen and touched by the crowd and yet promises and declares that he who is clean of heart shall see God, He proves by this very fact that He, who was then present, was not the Father because He promised, while actually present to their gaze, that whoever was clean of heart would see the Father. (29) He, therefore, who was promising these things, was not the Father, but the Son; for He who was the Son promised what would be seen hereafter. His promise would have been meaningless, had He not been the Son. Why did He promise the clean of heart that they would see the Father, if those who were then present were already seeing Christ, the Father? However, because He was the Son and not the Father, it was fitting that the Son, inasmuch as He is the Image of the Father, should be then seen; and the Father, because He is invisible, is deservedly promised and designated as the one who would be seen by the clean of heart.

(30) Let these few words, therefore, which I have expressed about so many questions, suffice against that heretic. For a broad and spacious field will open before us, if we would wish to further pursue this particular heretic. Now that he has been deprived of those two passages, he is like a man who has had his two eyes gouged out;²⁵ he is completely overcome by the blindness of his own doctrine.

Chapter 29

Next, well-ordered reason and the authority of our faith bid us (in the words and the writings of our Lord set down in orderly fashion) to believe, after these things, also in the Holy Spirit, who was in times past promised to the Church and duly bestowed at the appointed, favorable moment. (2) He was indeed promised by the

²⁵ Novatian now claims that he has deprived his "heretical Cyclops" of all vision, leaving him utterly vanquished in the blindness of his error. Cf. *supra* 28.1.

prophet Joel but bestowed through Christ. "In the last days," says the prophet, "I will pour out from My spirit upon My servants and handmaids."¹ And the Lord said: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."² (3) Now the Lord sometimes calls the Holy Spirit the Paraclete and at other times proclaims Him to be the Spirit of truth.³ He is not new in the Gospel, nor has He been given in a novel way. For it was He who in the prophets reprov'd the people and in the apostles gave an invitation to the Gentiles.⁴ The former deserved to be reprov'd because they disregarded the Law, and those of the Gentiles who believe deserve to be assisted by the patronage of the Spirit, because they ardently desire to attain to the Law of the Gospel. (4) There are, undoubtedly, different kinds of functions in Him, since different times have different kinds of needs; yet He who acts thus is not different on that account. Nor is He someone else because He acts so; rather He is the selfsame one, distributing His functions according to the times, conditions, and circumstances of human events.⁵ (5) Accordingly the apostle Paul says: "Since we have the same spirit, as shown in that which is written: 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe and so we speak."⁶ (6) Therefore, it is one and the same Spirit who is in the prophets and in the apostles. He was, however, in the former only for awhile; whereas He abides in the latter forever. In other words, He is in the prophets but not to remain always in them, in the apostles, that He might abide in them forever. He has been apportioned to the former in moderation; to the latter, He has been wholly poured out, He was sparingly given to the one; upon the other, lavishly bestowed.⁷ He was not, however, manifested before the

1 Joel 3.2 (Vulgate 2.29).

2 John 20.22-23.

3 Cf. John 14.16-17; 15.26.

4 Cf. Gregory of Elvira, *Tract. Orig.* 20, lines 54-61 (CCL 69.143). Against the Marcionites, Novatian upholds the unity of the Holy Spirit's action under the two dispensations. In the Old Testament, He had threatened to forsake the Jews; in the New Testament, He fulfilled the threat.

5 Cf. Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 12.4.

6 2 Cor. 4.13.

7 Cf. John 3.34.

Lord's Resurrection but conferred by Christ's Resurrection. (7) In fact, Christ said: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth";⁸ and "When the Advocate has come whom I will send you from My Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from My Father";⁹ and "If I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you";¹⁰ and "when the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you to all truth."¹¹ (8) Since the Lord was about to go to heaven, He had to give the Paraclete to His disciples, that He might not leave them as orphans,¹² as it were, and abandon them without a defender or some sort of guardian. That would not have been proper at all.

(9) It is He who strengthened their hearts and minds, who clearly brought out for them the mysteries of the Gospel, who was within them the enlightener of divine things; through strength given by Him they feared neither bonds nor imprisonment for the sake of the Lord's name. Yes, they even trampled underfoot the very powers and torments of the world, because they were already armed and fortified through Him and possessed within themselves the gifts which this same Spirit distributes and consigns,¹³ as if they were ornaments, to the Church, the Bride of Christ.¹⁴ (10) In fact, it is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, bestows the gift of tongues, effects cures and miracles, does wondrous deeds, grants the power of discerning spirits, confers the power of administration, suggests¹⁵ what decisions should be made, and sets in order and arranges whatever charismatic gifts there are. Thus, He makes the Church of the Lord perfect and complete in every respect and in every detail.

(11) He it is who came upon the Lord as a dove after He had been

8 John 14.16-17.

9 John 15.26.

10 John 16.7.

11 John 16.13.

12 Cf. John 14.18.

13 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.8-11, 28.

14 Cf. Gregory of Elvira, *Tract. Orig.* 20, lines 150-59 (CCL 69.146).

15 The assistance of the Holy Spirit is described in the documents of the Church as a *suggestio* and *edoctio*.

baptized, and abode in Him.¹⁶ In Christ alone He dwells fully and entirely, not wanting in any measure¹⁷ or part; but in all His overflowing abundance dispensed and sent forth, so that other men might receive from Christ a first outpouring, as it were, of His graces. For the fountainhead of the entire Holy Spirit abides in Christ, that from Him might be drawn streams of grace and wondrous deeds because the Holy Spirit dwells affluently in Christ. (12) In fact, Isaiah prophesied this when he said: "And the spirit of wisdom and of understanding rests upon Him, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill Him."¹⁸ (13) He reiterated the very same thing in another passage in the person of the Lord Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me; to bring good news to the poor He has sent Me."¹⁹ (14) Likewise David says: "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellow kings."²⁰ (15) The apostle Paul says of Him: "For he who does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ";²¹ and, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."²²

(16) He it is who effects from water a second birth,²³ the seed, as it were, of a divine generation. He is also the consecrator of a heavenly birth,²⁴ "the pledge" of a promised "inheritance,"²⁵ a kind of written bond, so to speak, of eternal salvation. He it is who makes us

16 Cf. Matt. 3.16; Mark 1.10; Luke 3.22; John 1.33.

17 Cf. John 3.34.

18 Isa 11.2. We find the number seven already in St. Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 87.

19 Isa. 61.1.

20 Ps. 44(45).8.

21 Rom. 8.9.

22 2 Cor. 3.17.

23 A reference to the sacrament of baptism; cf. ch. 10.9. Subsequently Novatian's followers, willing to deny the validity of baptism already administered in the Church, were accustomed to rebaptize those who passed over from the Church to their schismatic movement (cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 73: CSEL 3.2.779.10).

24 This is possibly a reference to the sacrament of confirmation.

25 Eph. 1.14.

the temple of God²⁶ and makes us His dwelling place. He importunes the divine ears "on our behalf with ineffable groanings,"²⁷ thereby discharging His duties as Advocate and rendering His services in our defense. He has been given to dwell in our bodies and to bring about our sanctification. He brings our bodies, by this operation of His in us, to eternity and to the resurrection of immortality,²⁸ inasmuch as He accustoms them to be mingled in Himself with celestial power and to be associated with the divine eternity of His Holy Spirit. (17) For in Him and through Him, our bodies are trained to advance to immortality, learning to bridle themselves with moderation according to His commands. (18) For it is He who lusts against the flesh, because the flesh is contrary to Him.²⁹ (19) It is He who checks insatiable desires, breaks unbridled lust, quenches illicit passions, overcomes fiery assaults, averts drunkenness, resists avarice, drives away wanton revelries, binds together noble loves, strengthens good affections, does away with factions, explains the Rule of Truth, refutes heretics, banishes the impious and guards the Gospels.³⁰

(20) Of Him the Apostle likewise writes: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God."³¹ (21) Of Him he exults when he says: "But I think that I also have the Spirit of God."³² (22) Of Him he says: "And the spirit of the prophets is under the control of the prophets."³³ (23) Of Him he states: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in after times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies hypocritically, and having their conscience

26 Cf. 1 Cor. 3.16-17; 2 Cor. 6.16.

27 Rom. 8.26.

28 In the exercise of virtue, man is under the action of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him, effects his sanctification, and brings his body to a glorious resurrection. Elsewhere Novatian states that the aid which prods man to do good is a "gift of God" (cf. *De bon. pud.* 4.3, 14.3: CCL 4.116, 127).

29 Cf. Gal. 5.17.

30 A beautiful third-century affirmation that the Holy Spirit is keeper of Holy Writ.

31 1 Cor. 2.12.

32 1 Cor. 7.40.

33 1 Cor. 14.32.

seared.”³⁴ (24) Grounded in this Spirit, “no one” ever “says ‘Anathema’ to Jesus”;³⁵ no one has denied that Christ is the Son of God, nor has rejected God the Creator; no one utters any words against the Scriptures: no one lays down alien and sacrilegious ordinances; no one makes contradictory laws. (25) Whoever “shall have blasphemed” against Him, “does not have forgiveness, either in this world or in the world to come.”³⁶ (26) It is He who in the apostles renders testimony to Christ, in the martyrs manifests the unwavering faith of religion, in virgins encloses the admirable continence of sealed chastity. In the rest of men, He keeps the laws of the Lord’s teaching uncorrupted and untainted. He destroys heretics, corrects those in error, reproves unbelievers, reveals impostors, and also corrects the wicked. He keeps the Church uncorrupted and inviolate in the holiness of perpetual virginity and truth.³⁷

Chapter 30

What we have stated briefly, discussed concisely, and presented succinctly concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—let these things now suffice. They could indeed have been propounded at greater length and drawn out with more solid argumentation, because the entire Old and New Testaments could have been brought forth to prove that such is the true faith. (2) The heretics, however, in their persistent opposition to the truth, are wont to draw out their controversy with the Catholic faith and genuine tradition. They are scandalized by Christ because the Scriptures assert that He is also God and we believe this. Therefore, that all heretical calumny against our Faith may cease, it is right that we should discuss the fact that Christ is also God (in such a way that it will not interfere with the truth of Scripture or with our faith) because the Scriptures assert and because we maintain and believe that there is only one God.

³⁴ 1 Tim. 4.1-2.

³⁵ 1 Cor. 12.3.

³⁶ Matt. 12.32; Mark 3.29; Luke 12.10.

³⁷ Cf. 2 Cor. 11.2; Gregory of Elvira, *Tract. Orig.* 20, lines 93-145, 133 (CCL 69.144-45)

(3) In fact, the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is Himself God the Father, as well as those who would have had Him to be only a man, have drawn from Scripture the elements and the reasons for their error and perversity. For when they observed that it was written that God is one, they thought that they could not hold such a belief unless they thought they should believe that Christ was a mere man or that He was really God the Father. Wherefore they were accustomed to put their calumnies in syllogistic form to try to justify their own error. (4) Now, the heretics¹ who say that Jesus Christ is the Father argue as follows: If God is one and Christ is God, then Christ is the Father, because God is one. If Christ is not the Father, while Christ, the Son, is also God, then two gods seem to have been introduced, contrary to the Scriptures. (5) On the other hand, the heretics² who maintain that Christ is only a man syllogize from the opposite position in the following manner: If the Father is one and the Son another and if the Father is God and Christ is God, then there is not one God, but there are two gods introduced on an equal footing: the Father and the Son. If there is one God, then Christ must be a man so that the Father may rightly be the one God. (6) Indeed, the Lord is crucified, as it were, between two thieves, just as He was once crucified;³ thus He is exposed on either side to the impious revilings of these heretics.

(7) However, neither do the Holy Scriptures nor do we afford them any ground for their present ruin and blindness, because they either will not, or cannot, see what has been so clearly laid down on the open page of the Divine Writings. (8) Not only do we know but we also read, believe, and maintain that there is one God who made both the heavens and the earth, because we do not know of any other god, nor will we ever be able to learn of another, inasmuch as there is no other. (9) “I am,” He says, “God; and there is no other besides Me: a just God and a savior.”⁴ (10) And in another place, He asserts: “I am the First and the Last, and besides Me there is no God.

¹ The Patripassians.

² The Adoptianists.

³ Cf. Matt. 27.38; Mark 15.27; Luke 23.33; John 19.18.

⁴ Isa. 43.11; Hosea 13.4.

Who is as I am?"⁵ (11) Again He says: "Who has measured the heavens with a span and the earth with the width of the fist? Who has weighed the mountains on scales, and the woods on a balance?"⁶ (12) And Hezekiah says: "That all men may know that You alone are God."⁷ (13) Furthermore, the Lord Himself says: "Why do you ask Me about what is good? The one God is good."⁸ (14) And also Paul the apostle says: "Who alone has immortality and dwells in light inaccessible, whom no man has seen or can see."⁹ (15) In another place he also says: "There is no intermediary where there is only one; but God is one."¹⁰ (16) Now just as we hold and read and believe this, so too we must not disregard any part of the Heavenly Scriptures. We must not in any way reject the marks of Christ's divinity which are set down in the Scriptures, that we may not be accused of having violated the integrity of our holy Faith by violating the authority of the Scriptures. (17) And let us, therefore, believe this, since it is a very true saying that Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is the Son of God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."¹¹ (18) It is also written: "My Lord and my God."¹² Finally, it is written: "Of whom are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is, over all things, God blessed forever."¹³

(19) What shall we say, then? Is Scripture placing before us two gods? If so, how does it assert that "there is one God"?¹⁴ Or is it possible that Christ is not also God? If so, what is the meaning of those words addressed to Christ: "My Lord and My God"?¹⁵ (20) Therefore, unless we hold all this with due reverence and sound

⁵ Isa. 44.6-7.

⁶ Isa. 40.12.

⁷ Isa. 37.20; 4 Kings 19.19.

⁸ Matt. 19.17; Mark 10.18; Luke 18.19.

⁹ 1 Tim. 6.16.

¹⁰ Gal. 3.20.

¹¹ John 1.1, 2, 14.

¹² John 20.28.

¹³ Rom. 9.5.

¹⁴ Gal. 3.20.

¹⁵ John 20.28.

reasoning, we shall assuredly be looked upon as persons who have given the heretics an occasion to err. Certainly, this is not due to any fault of the Heavenly Scriptures, which never can deceive, but rather results from the prejudice of human error, whereby they willed to be heretics. (21) First of all, then, we must refute the argument of those who presume to make against us the charge of saying that there are two gods. (22) It is written, and they cannot deny it, that "there is one Lord."¹⁶ Now, what do they think of Christ? Do they think that He is the Lord or that He is simply not the Lord? On the contrary, there is not the least doubt in their minds that He is the Lord. Therefore, if their reasoning is correct, we have, as a result, two Lords. How is it then that according to the Scriptures there is one Lord? (23) Furthermore, Christ is called "the one Master";¹⁷ yet we read that the apostle Paul is also a master.¹⁸ We no longer have, therefore, one master; for according to these observations, we gather that there are two masters. How, then, is Christ the one Master, according to the Scriptures? (24) In the Scriptures, one is said to be good, God;¹⁹ yet it is likewise said in the Scriptures that Christ is good.²⁰ They should rightly infer from this, therefore, that there is not one, but two who are good. How, then, is it stated according to the good faith of the Scriptures, that there is one who is good? (25) They do not think that the truth, that there is one Lord, is prejudiced in any way but that other truth, that Christ is also Lord. Nor do we think that the truth, that there is one Master, is prejudiced in any way by the truth, that Paul is also a master. Finally, neither do they assert that the truth, that there is one who is good, is prejudiced in any way by the truth, that Christ is also called good. Let them acknowledge, then, by the same line of reasoning that the truth, that there is one God, is not prejudiced in any way by the other truth, that Christ also is declared to be God.

¹⁶ Deut. 6.4; Eph. 4.5.

¹⁷ Matt. 23.8, 10.

¹⁸ Cf. 2 Tim. 1.11.

¹⁹ Cf. Matt. 19.17; Mark 10.18; Luke 18.19.

²⁰ Cf. Matt. 19.16; Mark 10.17; Luke 18.18; John 10.11.

Chapter 31

There is, then, God the Father, the Founder and Creator of all things, who alone is without origin, invisible, immense, immortal, eternal, the one God. Nothing whatever, I will not say can be preferred, but can even be compared to His greatness, His majesty, and His power. (2) Of Him when He willed,¹ the Word, who is the Son, was born. The Word is to be understood here not as a sound that strikes the air nor the tone of the voice forced from the lungs,² but rather is discerned in the substance of a power proceeding from God. Apostle has never ascertained, prophet has not discovered, angel has not fathomed, nor has any creature known the hallowed secrets of His sacred and divine birth. They are known to the Son alone, who has known the secrets of the Father.³

(3) Since He is begotten of the Father, He is always in the Father. I say "always," however, not in such a manner as to prove that He is unborn, but to prove that He is born. Now, He who is before all time must be said to have been always in the Father; for no time can be attributed to Him who is before time. He is always in the Father, lest the Father be not always the Father. On the other hand, the Father also precedes Him; for, as the Father, He must of necessity be prior, because He who knows no origin must of necessity precede Him who has an origin. At the same time the Son must be less than the Father, for He knows that He is in the Father, having an origin, since he is born. Although He has an origin inasmuch as He is born, yet through His Father He is, in a certain manner, like⁴ Him by birth, because He

1 Cf. Hippolytus, *Contra haer. Noeti* 10, 11.

2 Novatian's argument is directed against the Modalists. Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 7; Hippolytus, *Philosophumena* 10.33. Modalism defends monotheism rigidly up to the point of conceiving the Trinity of the divine Persons as three modes of being and of self-manifestation of the one God. The same divine Person, insofar as it creates and generates, is Father; insofar as it is generated and redeems men, is Son; insofar as it sanctifies, is Holy Spirit. Modalism does not admit of a real distinction between the three divine Persons.

3 Cf. Matt. 11.27.

4 Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio theologica* 3 (*Orat.* 29) 11 (PG 36.88; tr. by C. G. Browne and J. E. Swallow, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 7 [New York 1894] 304-5); Aebly, *op. cit.* 111.

is born of that Father, who alone has no origin. (4) He, therefore, when the Father willed, proceeded from the Father; and He who was in the Father, because He was of the Father, was afterwards⁵ with the Father since He—namely that divine substance whose name is the Word, through whom "all things were made and without whom nothing was made"⁶—proceeded from the Father. (5) For all things are after Him, because they are "through Him";⁷ consequently He is before all things (but after the Father), since all things were made through Him. He proceeded from the Father, according to whose will all things were made. God assuredly proceeded from God, constituting as Son the Second Person after the Father, but not taking from the Father that which makes Him one God.⁸

(6) If He had not been born, as unborn He would have been compared with the Father who is unborn. Since an equality would have appeared in both, He would have constituted a second unborn, and therefore two gods. (7) If He had not been begotten, He would have been placed side by side with Him who is not begotten. Since both would have been found to be equal, as unbegotten, they would accordingly have given us two gods; Christ, then, would have given rise to two gods. (8) If He were, as the Father, without an origin, He Himself would also have proved to be, as the Father, the beginning of all things, making two beginnings; consequently He would have also placed before us two gods. (9) Again if He Himself were not the Son, but a Father begetting another son from Himself, then He would have been rightly compared with the Father and would have been shown to be as great as the latter. Thus, He would have constituted two Fathers and approved also of two gods. (10) If He had been invisible, He would have been compared with Him who is invisible and declared equal to Him. He would have placed before us two invisibles; consequently He would have also permitted two gods. (11) If He had been incomprehensible, if He had also possessed whatever other attributes belong to the Father, then we assert that

5 That is, after the *nativitas*; cf. ch. 17.3.

6 John 1.3.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Cf. Arnobius the Younger, *Arnobii Catholici et Serapionis Conflictus de Deo trino et uno* (PL 53.257B/C).

He would have certainly occasioned the controversy of two gods that these heretics raise. (12) As a matter of fact, whatever He is, He is not of Himself because He is not unborn, but is of the Father because He is begotten. For whether He is the Word, whether He is Power, whether He is Wisdom, whether He is Light, whether He is the Son—(13) whatever He is of these, He is not from any other source, but from the Father, as we have already mentioned above. Owing His origin to the Father, He could not cause any disunion in the godhead by making two gods, inasmuch as He drew His origin, in being born, of Him who is the one God. (14) In this respect, since He is the Only-begotten and the First-born of Him who—because He has no origin—is alone the beginning and head of all things, He declared accordingly that God is one. And He proved that He is not subject to any origin or beginning, but rather that He is the origin and the beginning of all things.

(15) The Son does nothing of His own will or counsel and He does not come from Himself. He obeys all His Father's commands and precepts; hence although his birth proves that He is the Son, His docile obedience proclaims Him to be the minister of the will of the Father from whom He is. While He renders Himself obedient to the Father in all things, even though He is also God, yet by His obedience He shows that the Father, from whom He also drew His origin, is the one God.

(16) As a result, He could never constitute a second God because He did not constitute a second origin, inasmuch as He received, before all time, the source of His birth from Him who has no beginning. Since what is unborn and (such is God the Father alone, who is beyond an origin, and from whom is He who is born) is the origin of all other things, He who is born of Him rightly comes from Him who has no origin. This proves that [the Unborn] is the origin from which He Himself is; and even though He who is born is God, nevertheless He shows that God is one whom He who was born has confirmed to be without origin.

(17) Therefore He is God, but begotten precisely that He might be

God. He is also Lord, but for this very reason was He born of the Father, that He might be Lord. He is also an angel, but an angel who has been destined by His Father to announce the great counsel of God.⁹ (18) His divinity is so presented to us that it may not appear, either through discordancy or through inequality in the Godhead, that there he has produced two Gods. For all things have been subjected to Him, as Son, by the Father. The fact that He Himself, together with all the things that are subject to Him, is subject to His Father¹⁰ proves that He is indeed the Son of His Father; however, He is considered the Lord and God of all else. (19) Because all subjected things are given over to Him who is God, and the Son is indebted to the Father for the subjection of all things to Himself, He refers back again to the Father the entire power of the Godhead. (20) Hence one God is demonstrated, the true and eternal Father, from whom alone this power of the Godhead is sent forth, transmitted, and directed to the Son, and is returned again, by communion of substance, to the Father. (21) The Son is indeed shown to be God, since it is clear that the divinity has been handed over and granted to Him. Nevertheless, the Father proves to be one God; for from one order to another that divine Majesty makes its way back again to the Father and reverts to Him who gave it, since the Son Himself delivers it up again to Him. (22) Thus "the Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus"¹¹ has power—since He is God—over every creature subjected to Him by His own Father, together with all creation subject to Him. Found also to be in harmony with God, His Father, Christ Jesus, by abiding in Him (because He also was heard),¹² has succinctly proved that His Father is the one and only true God.

⁹ Cf. Isa. 9.6.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Cor. 15.25-28.

¹¹ 1 Tim. 2.5.

¹² The last passage of the text is so hopelessly corrupt that there must be doubt as to what Scripture, if any, Novatian had in mind. "Because He also was heard" may be a reference to Heb. 5.7; "abiding in Him," to John 14.10.