

INTRODUCTION

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THE *Octavius* survives only in a single manuscript, preserved by the happy accident of being mistaken for Book VIII of Arnobius *Adversus Nationes*. This association is an interesting addition to the links connecting it with Roman Africa. The work has always been coupled with the name of M. Minucius Felix, who figures in it as a busy and successful advocate practising at Rome, disqualified for office by his adoption of the Christian faith. The writer was a fluent and well-read man of culture, drawing freely upon Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid, and a practised rhetorician intimately familiar with Cicero and Seneca. Apart from later literary links with Arnobius and Lactantius, who come from Africa, the affinities, in subject matter and treatment, with Tertullian (and even Cyprian) are very close; but the scenery and atmosphere and colour are drawn from cosmopolitan Rome, and style and vocabulary adhere to the tradition of Cicero and Seneca, and shun the forced and exotic mannerisms of Fronto or Tertullian.

The distinctive interest of the *Octavius* lies in the picture which it supplies of the social and religious conditions at Rome at the end of the second century, and among these the interactions between Roman and African Christianity form an instructive feature.

The three *dramatis personae* are representative—

M. Minucius Felix, the author, professes to recount his recollection of a debate that took place between his two friends Octavius Januarius and Q. Caecilius Natalis, on the validity and merits of Pagan and Christian beliefs. That Minucius Felix was an actual person, a distinguished advocate at Rome, is assumed by Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* v. 1. 21) and by Jerome, though neither adds anything that might not be inferred directly from the Dialogue; Jerome had also seen a *De Fato* ascribed to his hand, but on grounds of style was disposed to question its authenticity; and it may have been a fictitious substitute for the work contemplated in § 36.

Real or dramatic, the writer represents the cultured and professional classes of the metropolis, and his work marks the advance gained by Christianity in social and civic status. It was no longer limited to the underworld of the submerged, the servile and the illiterate, won by the apostolic zeal of missionary aliens. It was not constrained to adopt, with Justin, the language of "Apology" and humbly plead for hearing. It was strong enough, with Tertullian, to carry the anti-Pagan offensive into the enemy's lines—*Adversus Gentes*.^a It had become the movement of reform, of intellectual and moral protest. Already the tables were turned; to men of culture and refinement Paganism was bankrupt. As a system of thought it was obsolete, it had ceased to be rational: as a bond of citizenship, or as a social discipline, all virtue had gone out of it. Religion, alike in mythology and ritual, had more and more become a rubbish or refuse heap of waste products, a storehouse for discarded relics of barbarism and of super-

^a Part of the title of Tertullian's *Apology*.

stitution. Polytheism, in its cosmopolitan developments, passed sentence on itself. In its attempted amalgamation of deities, syncretism, so far from reconciling, renovating, and preserving, ensured and accelerated the common extinction of all. The Pagan Pantheon was a museum of dead mummies, possessed of little more than archaeological interest.

The second of the trio is Octavius Januarius, who is cast for the rôle of chief speaker, and champion of Christian religion. He is represented as already dead, and the discourse is a tribute to his gifts and memory. In determining the date, the *reminiscent* setting is of some importance, as it implies that the dramatic date precedes that of publication, and may here and there cover minor divergences in the situation depicted. Octavius had been brought up in the Pagan tradition, and while in training for their profession had made Minucius his bosom friend and confidant. As experience matured, intellectual and moral considerations combined to produce a revolt against Paganism, and in transferring his allegiance to Christianity he had led the way. As was so common with young Romans of means and enterprise, he had sought his fortunes in the provinces, and had settled down with wife and family in Roman Africa, perhaps at Cirta itself. Change of surroundings had only served to strengthen his convictions, and he now felt it incumbent on any high-minded man to warn his friends against even outward compliance with the demoralizing conventions of Pagan belief. When Caecilius kissed his hand to the image of Serapis, he felt bound to utter his protest, and the discourse claims to reproduce the debate that arose out of the incident.

Q. Caecilius Natalis represents current Paganism in its impotent decline. The name actually occurs in inscriptions found at Cirta, and it is far from improbable that the magistrate who bore it in A.D. 210 is the actual person who takes part in the dialogue. The date agrees well with the belief that the composition may well be assigned to the opening of the third century, and derives its materials from Tertullian's *Apology*, issued in A.D. 197. Caecilius in § 13 associates himself with the later Academic school, agnostic in outlook, acquiescing in the superstitions of the illiterate multitude, while professing polite but sceptical interest in the speculations and contradictions of rival philosophies. The discourse represents him as won for Christianity by the earnestness, the eloquence and charm of his friend Octavius.

The setting, modelled on Ciceronian prefaces, borrowed from precedents of Plato, is gracefully elaborated: it would be hard to find anything better of its kind in Latin literature. The scene is aptly laid at Ostia, where at some 12 miles from the capital the Tiber falls into the sea. The seaport of the capital had become the receiving-house for the transmarine religions of the East. The dialogue takes the shrine and image of Serapis for its text; the archaeologist has located a temple of the Great Mother, and at least four sanctuaries of Mithra: in one the old Roman Silvanus occupied a niche, while in another Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus were figured among Eastern symbols of the planets and signs of the Zodiac; and the absence of references to Mithra worship, both here and in the *Apology* of Tertullian, is remarkable. Ostia, the meeting-ground of faiths and home of syncretism, was also a

favourite health-resort; and thither, in the heats of vintage time, when the law-courts were in vacation, the three friends had repaired to enjoy the benefits of sea breezes and the saline baths. The walk beside the river-bank, the beach, the boats hauled up upon their baulks, the breakwater of piled rocks, the touches of Theocritean naturalism in the play of waves on paddling feet, and the eager boys competing at their "ducks and drakes" are admirably rendered.

The conduct of the case is on forensic lines throughout, speeches for the prosecution and defence, addressed to Minucius as presiding arbiter, filled with rhetorical appeal, but not subjected to cross-examination, or to the tests of evidence or dialectical debate. Caecilius prefaces his brief for Paganism with philosophic commonplaces on the precarious results of reasoning processes, and on the drawn battle between the upholders of providence, of chance, and of Fate (fixed law or destiny) in the ordering of the universe (§ 5). None holds the field; and in the absence of authority and proof, tradition and history are entitled to the casting vote. Religion rests on the accumulated wisdom of forefathers, and every nation, tribe and city contribute added sanctions to its support (§ 6). To Rome in particular religious beliefs, rites and observances—the gods of Rome—have brought world-wide dominion and pre-eminence. The Roman Empire is the standing evidence of the truth of religion (§ 7). If the profession of atheism has brought disaster upon trained thinkers and philosophers, what presumption it is for a horde of low-born and illiterate sectaries to blaspheme and to deny! (§ 8). He then proceeds to rehearse, and with

circumstantial gusto to embroider, the malicious charges circulated against Christians^a—tales of sacramental feeding upon human flesh and blood, of Thyestean rites of initiation and the death of new-born children, of love-feast orgies, of promiscuous intercourse between "brothers" and "sisters," of worship of a crucified malefactor sometimes with an ass's head, of secret and obscene rites that shunned the light of day (§ 9). He goes on to denounce the sour and anti-social attitude of Christians towards all forms of ceremonial festivity, their abstinence from galas of public rejoicing, their carping reprobation of the theatre, the circus and the games (§ 12). On the strength of ridiculous beliefs about a future life, they not only bring delusions, misery and detestation upon themselves, but become the enemies of good fellowship and the kill-joys of all wholesome *joie de vivre* (§§ 11-13).

After a short interlude (§§ 14-15), which gives Minucius an opportunity for displaying his judicial acumen upon the rules of evidence, and the relation of rhetoric to dialectic, Octavius plunges eagerly into the defence. The way has been prepared for an easy victory. Caecilius, he observes, has throughout adopted a negative and non-committal attitude: he has raised certain pleas and difficulties, but has brought no proofs in defence of the validity or coherence of polytheistic beliefs. This inconsistency is due (he feels sure) not to wilful sophistry, but to the inherent conditions of his case. It invites, and must abide, the question: reason is man's prerogative; and even the poor and simple-minded must

^a The calumnies are almost all derived from Tertullian's *Apology*, not from first-hand observation.

pass judgement according to their conscience and ability (§ 16).

The following chapters (§§ 17-19) contain a long and rhetorical exposition of the argument from design, drawn largely from Cicero *De Natura Deorum*, and Seneca; and §§ 20-24 discuss on similar lines the origin of gods in folk-lore, myth, poetry and hero-worship, with copious illustrations of the barbarous, grotesque, irrational, degrading and obscene elements preserved in mythology, cult and forms of worship. In rebutting the appeal to history, the author takes a more independent line. The argument, he shows, cuts both ways. Great empires, under other auspices and gods, preceded and rivalled that of Rome, and on the other hand the nations subjected by Rome had gods whom Rome herself appropriated and admitted to an equal franchise with her own. Gods of the conquered enjoy a vogue greater than those of the conqueror. Indeed, the indigenous gods and rituals have poorer credentials and a sway inferior to those of Greece, Phrygia, Syria and Egypt. The attack on divine origins is carried into the field of history—the foundation of the city as an asylum for vagabonds and criminals, the rape of the Sabine women, and the successive episodes of violence, bad faith and sacrilege, by which the Empire had been built up. Throughout, the anti-patriotic note is surprisingly shrill, even on the lips of a provincial. It must belong to a period, or district, in which the terrors of persecution were in abeyance, and it helps to account for the distrust and animosity with which later emperors and officials regarded Christian aims and propaganda.

The inconclusive evidence of auguries and auspices

is handled as in the *De Divinatione* (§ 26). Two chapters (§§ 26-27) are then devoted to a long digression upon demons, adhering to lines laid down by Tertullian in *Apology* ch. 22. Their existence rests on the authority of Greek poets and philosophers, of Eastern Magi, of Jewish tradition, and the phenomena of exorcism. They are not impersonated in the gods of heathendom, but are unclean and wandering spirits, who utilize the rites and paraphernalia of superstition for the promulgation and gratification of vice. By various forms of possession they get entrance into men's minds, pervert all better instincts, disorder them with filthy and degrading passions, and wage bitter war with all that checks or discountenances their indulgence (§§ 26-27). Hatred and persecution of Christians is due to their malign influence. They are the lying spirits who invent the preposterous calumnies, repeated and endorsed by Caecilius—too outrageous to deserve consideration, and contradicted by the whole tenor of Christian profession, Christian worship, and Christian behaviour. They are flagrant travesties, borrowed from the unspeakable abominations perpetuated in Pagan rites and mysteries (§§ 28-30). There, in literature and in practice, lay the seed-plot and the forcing-frames for all the worst offences charged against the Christians. Religion had become the organized stronghold of all forms of sexual excess, and it was no wonder that the vested interests of immorality combined in hatred of the common foe. Upon these counts no course lay open to Caecilius but unconditional surrender (§§ 39-40).

The closing sections are an appreciation of the distinctive qualities of Christian ethos, of their trust

in God and their conception of his attributes, with special stress upon belief in immortality, in the approaching end of the world, and in retribution upon the wicked (§§ 31-35). There are telling passages upon God's appreciation of the Christian wrestler and confessor, but nothing that in spiritual simplicity and conviction can quite compare with the *Letter to Diognetus* (§§ 36-38).^a

The chief lack lies on the constructive and doctrinal side of Christianity. The doctrine of God is approached from familiar Romanized forms of Platonic, Stoic and Epicurean theism. There is no Christology; even the name of Jesus Christ does not once occur: the charge of superstitious reverence for the Cross is met by far-reaching disclaimer, and by the contentions that the crucified was not a malefactor, and the cross itself a common emblem on Roman banners and in a great variety of symbolic representations (§ 29). Quotations from the New Testament Scriptures are rare, and their note is either ethical or theistic. Belief in resurrection and immortality is not grounded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pauline interpretations of the person of Christ, of atonement, of justification, of mystical union with the believer, have left no trace, nor any of their subsequent developments in Greek theologians or the Apologists of the second century. There is no doctrine of the Holy Spirit; scant reference to the religion of experience, and virtually none to institutional Church Order of ministry or sacraments. Thus the treatise does not voice the deeper impulses of Christian motive and belief so much as the reactions produced on Pagan culture by the moral

^a Usually ascribed to the middle of the second century.

standards and convictions upheld by Christianity. It is the work of a trained rhetorician, a product of the Roman schools of rhetoric and law, which flourished in the Antonine and post-Antonine age, and which we associate with the names of a Celsus and a Fronto, as scornful assailants of the Christian propaganda; its primary value lies in revealing the forces and the processes by which outworn tradition succumbed before the protests of a living faith.

The Latin text of the *Octavius* is based on a single manuscript transcribed by a very illiterate copyist, and fortuitously attached to the *Adversus Gentes* of Arnobius. Since its discovery in 1543 it has been a favourite playground for corrections and emendations, scattered through many editions, monographs, and learned transactions and periodicals. By the generous and valued permission of the editors, we are allowed to print the text prepared by J. P. Waltzing for the Teubner series of Greek and Roman writers. Not only does it provide the standard text, but for every student of the subject, that edition, with its admirable equipment of bibliography, indices, critical apparatus, literary sources, parallels and illustrations, is indispensable.

M. MINUCHII FELICIS: OCTAVIUS

1 I. Cogitanti mihi et cum animo meo Octavi boni et
fidelissimi contubernalis memoriam recensenti tanta
dulcedo et adfectio hominis inhaesit, ut ipse quodam-
modo mihi viderer in praeterita redire, non ea quae
iam transacta et decursa sunt, recordatione revocare :
2 ita eius contemplatio quantum subtracta est oculis,
tantum pectori meo ac paene intimis sensibus in-
3 plicata est. Nec inmerito discedens vir eximius
et sanctus inmensum sui desiderium nobis reliquit,
utpote cum et ipse tanto nostri semper amore flagra-
verit, ut et in ludicris et seriis pari mecum voluntate
concineret eadem velle vel nolle : crederes unam
4 mentem in duobus fuisse divisam. Sic solus in
amoribus conscius, ipse socius in erroribus : et cum
discussa caligine de tenebrarum profundo in lucem
sapientiae et veritatis emergerem, non respuit
comitem, sed quod est gloriosius, praecurrit.
5 Itaque cum per universam convictus nostri et fami-
liaritatis aetatem mea cogitatio volveretur, in illo
praecipue sermone eius mentis meae resedit intentio,
quo Q. Caecilium superstitiosis vanitatibus etiamnunc
inhaerentem disputatione gravissima ad veram reli-
gionem reformavit.

MINUCIUS FELIX: OCTAVIUS

I. As in thought I pondered and reflected over 1
memories of my good and trusty comrade, Octavius,
such an impression of sweetness and charm remained
with me that I seemed somehow reliving in the past,
rather than recalling to memory things over and
done ; so vividly did his image, though withdrawn 2
from the eyes, remain imprinted on my heart and
inmost sense. No wonder that on his departure so 3
excellent and saintly a man has left behind him a
measureless sense of loss ; the fact is that he
cherished such warm affection for me that, both in our
amusements and serious occupations, our wills were
tuned to perfect concert, whether of likes or dislikes ;
you might have thought a single mind had been
parted into two. Thus he was at once sole confidant 4
of my affections, and my partner in wanderings from
truth ; and when, after the gloom had been dispelled,
I was emerging from the depth of darkness into the
light of wisdom and truth, he did not reject me as
a companion, but—all honour to him—led the way.
So, as my thoughts ranged over the whole period of 5
our association and familiarity, my attention fastened
above all else on that discourse of his, in which, by
sheer weight of argument, he converted Caecilium,
who was still immersed in superstitious vanities, to
true religion.

- 1 II. Nam negotii et visendi mei gratia Romam contenderat, relicta domo, coniuge, liberis, et—quod est in liberis amabilius—adhuc annis innocentibus et adhuc dimidiata verba temptantibus, loquellam ipso offensantis linguae fragmine dulciorem.
- 2 Quo in adventu eius non possum exprimere sermonibus, quanto quamque inpatienti gaudio exultaverim, cum augeret maxime laetitiam meam amicissimi hominis inopinata praesentia.
- 3 Igitur post unum et alterum diem, cum iam et aviditatem desiderii frequens adsiduitatis usus implesset et quae per absentiam mutuam de nobis nesciebamus, relatione alterna comperissemus, placuit Ostiam petere, amoenissimam civitatem, quod esset corpori meo siccandis umoribus de marinis lavacris blanda et adposita curatio: sane et ad vindemiam feriae iudiciariam curam relaxaverant. Nam id temporis post aestivam diem in temperiem semet autumnitas dirigebat.
- 4 Itaque cum diluculo ad mare inambulando litori pergeremus, ut et aura adspirans leniter membra vegetaret et cum eximia voluptate molli vestigio cedens harena subsideret, Caecilius simulacro Serapidis denotato, ut vulgus superstitiosus solet, manum ori admovens osculi, labiis pressit.
- 1 III. Tunc Octavius ait: "Non boni viri est, Marce frater, hominem domi forisque lateri tuo inhaerentem sic in hac inperitiae vulgaris caecitate deserere, ut tam luculento die in lapides eum patiaris impingere, effigiatos sane et unctos et coronatos, cum scias huius

II. He had come to Rome on business and to pay 1 me a visit, leaving home and wife and children—children still at the lovable stage of the years of innocence, trying to form broken words, in the pretty prattle which the broken efforts of a stumbling tongue render still sweeter. Words cannot express 2 the transports of pleasure and joy with which I welcomed his arrival, and the unexpectedness of a visit from so dear a friend enhanced my delight beyond measure.

Well, after one or two days, when frequency of 3 intercourse had satisfied the eager longings of affection, and we had learned by mutual talk things of which, through mutual absence, we were uninformed, we decided to go to Ostia, a very pleasant resort, as a course of sea baths seemed an agreeable and apt treatment as a corrective for the humours of my body; and just then too the vintage holidays had brought relief from judicial duties. For at that time after the summer solstice autumn was beginning to turn to a milder warmth.

So then, early one morning, as we were walking sea- 4 ward along the shore, that the fresh sea breeze might invigorate our limbs, and that the yielding sand might give the delightful sensation of subsidence at each footstep, Caecilius noticed an image of Serapis, and—as is the superstitious habit of the vulgar—put his hand to his mouth and blew it a kiss.

III. Then Octavius said: "With a friend who 1 indoors and out clings to your side, no good man, brother Marcus, has the right to leave him in the thick darkness of vulgar ignorance, and allow him in broad daylight to wreck himself on stones, however carved and anointed and garlanded they may be,

erroris non minorem ad te quam ad ipsum infamiam redundare."

2 Cum hoc sermone eius medium spatium civitatis
3 emensi iam liberum litus tenebamus. Ibi harenas
extimas, velut sterneret ambulacro, perfundens
lenis unda tendebat: et, ut semper mare etiam
positis flatibus inquietum est, etsi non canis spumosis-
que fluctibus exhibat ad terram, tamen crispis tor-
tuosisque ibidem erroribus delectati perquam sumus,
cum in ipso aequoris limine plantas tingeremus,
quod vicissim nunc adpulsum nostris pedibus ad-
luderet fluctus, nunc relabens ac vestigia retrahens
4 in sese resorberet. Sensim itaque tranquilleque pro-
gressi oram curvi molliter litoris iter fabulis fallen-
tibus legebamus. Haec fabulae erant Octavi dis-
5 serentis de navigatione narratio. Sed ubi eundi
spatium satis iustum cum sermone consumpsimus,
eandem emensi viam rursus versis vestigiis tere-
bamus, et cum ad id loci ventum est, ubi subductae
naviculae substratis roboribus a terrena labe sus-
pensae quiescebant, pueros videmus certatim
gestientes testarum in mare iaculationibus ludere.
6 Is lusus est testam teretem iaculatione fluctuum
levigatam legere de litore, eam testam plano situ
digitis comprehensam inclinem ipsum atque humi-
lem quantum potest super undas inrotare, ut illud
iaculum vel dorsum maris raderet enataret, dum
leni impetu labitur, vel summis fluctibus tonsis
emicaret emergeret, dum adsiduo saltu sublevatur.
Is se in pueris victorem ferebat, cuius testa et pro-
curreret longius et frequentius exsiliret.

^a The *ambulacrum* was a regular feature of the baths, villas, and public resorts, which provided opportunities for

when you know that the shame of his error redounds no less to your discredit than to his."

The conversation brought us half-way from the 2 town to the open beach. A gentle ripple, playing over 3 the verge of the sands, levelled them into a sort of promenade^a: the sea, even where there is no breeze, is in constant movement, and drove shorewards not in white crested waves, but in curling ripples. Its vagaries were quite delightful, as we let it wet our soles at the water's edge, as the advancing wave now played around our feet, and anon receded and withdrew, sucking back into itself. So we went on 4 our quiet leisurely way, skirting the edge of the gently curving shore and beguiling the way with stories. Our stories were an account of Octavius's adventures at sea. But when, engaged in talk, we had 5 gone some distance, we turned back and retraversed our steps; and when we had reached the place where some boats, supported on oak planking, to save them from ground rot, were lying idle, we saw a party of boys competing eagerly in their game of throwing sherds into the sea. The game is to choose 6 from the shore a flat sherd, one smoothed by the friction of the waves, to catch hold of the sherd by the flat side, and then bending forward and stooping, to send it spinning as far as one can on the top of the waves, so that the missile either skims the surface of the sea and swims on its way, gliding forward with a gentle impulse; or else shaves the tops of the waves, glancing and jumping as it takes its successive leaps. The boy won, whose sherd went furthest, and made most hops.

quiet constitutions, and for readings, lectures, and organized discussion.

1 IV. Igitur cum omnes hac spectaculi voluptate
caperemur, Caecilius nihil intendere neque de con-
tentione ridere, sed tacens, anxius, segregatus dolere
2 nescio quid vultu fatebatur. Cui ego: "Quid
hoc est rei? cur non agnosco, Caecili, alacritatem
tuam illam et illam oculorum etiam in seriis hilari-
tatem requiro?"

3 Tum ille: "Iam dudum me Octavi nostri acriter
angit et remordet oratio, qua in te invectus obiur-
gavit neglegentiae, ut me dissimulanter gravius
4 argueret inscientiae. Itaque progrediar ulterius:
de toto integro mihi cum Octavio res est. Si placet,
ut ipsius sectae homo cum eo disputem, iam profecto
intelletget facilius esse in contubernalibus disputare
5 quam conserere sapientiam. Modo in istis ad
tutelam balnearum iactis et in altum procurrentibus
petrarum obicibus residamus, ut et requiescere de
itinere possimus et intentius disputare."

6 Et cum dicto eius adsedimus, ita ut me ex tribus
medium lateris ambitione protegerent: nec hoc
obsequi fuit aut ordinis aut honoris, quippe cum amicitia
pares semper aut accipiat aut faciat, sed ut arbiter et
utrisque proximus aures darem et disceptantes duos
medius segregarem.

1 V. Tum sic Caecilius exorsus est: "Quamquam
tibi, Marce frater, de quo cum maxime quaerimus
non sit ambiguum, utpote cum diligenter in utroque
vivendi genere versatus repudiaris alterum, alterum
conprobaris, in praesentiarum tamen ita tibi infor-
mandus est animus, ut libram teneas aequissimi
iudicis nec in alteram partem propensus incumbas,
ne non tam ex nostris disputationibus nata sententia

IV. While we were all enjoying the fun of looking 1
on, Caecilius took no notice and did not laugh at the
sport, but in silence, gloomy and aloof, showed in his
face that he was troubled about something. I said 2
to him: "What is the matter? Why no hint,
Caecilius, of your usual liveliness, and why miss the
gaiety you show even in serious affairs?"

He replied: "I have been brooding over the 3
remarks of our friend Octavius, who stung and
nettled me, when he attacked and chid you for negli-
gence, but indirectly brought a heavier charge of
ignorance against me. I will go further: I will have 4
it out with Octavius from start to finish. If he is
agreeable that I, as one of the following, should
argue the case with him, he will, I am sure, find that
it is easier to discourse among comrades than to join
battle in philosophy. Let us just sit down on yonder 5
boulders piled to protect the baths, and running out
into the deep water: so that we may rest after our
walk, and concentrate on the argument."

We sat down, as he suggested, my friends flanking 6
me, covering either side, and myself in the middle;
not by way of etiquette as a mark of rank or distinc-
tion, for friendship always assumes or creates equality,
but that I might act as arbiter, give close hearing to
both, and as middle man part the two combatants.

V. Then Caecilius led off: "Although you, brother 1
Marcus, have made up your mind on the subject of
our inquiry, seeing that, after careful experience of
either way of life, you have repudiated the one and
approved the other, yet for the time being you must
deliberately hold the balance of impartial justice,
without any bias inclining to one side or the other,
so that your decision may be felt to have been based

2 quam ex tuis sensibus prolata videatur. Proinde,
 si mihi quasi novus aliqui et quasi ignarus partis
 utriusque considas, nullum negotium est patefacere,
 omnia in rebus humanis dubia, incerta, suspensa
 3 magisque omnia verisimilia quam vera: quo magis
 mirum est nonnullos taedio investigandae peni-
 tus veritatis cuilibet opinioni temere succumbere
 quam in explorando pertinaci diligentia perseverare.
 4 Itaque indignandum omnibus, indolendum est
 audere quosdam, et hoc studiorum rudes, litterarum
 profanos, expertes artium etiam sordidarum, certum
 aliquid de summa rerum ac maiestate decernere, de
 qua tot omnibus saeculis sectarum plurimarum usque
 5 adhuc ipsa philosophia deliberat. Nec inmerito,
 cum tantum absit ab exploratione divina humana
 mediocritas, ut neque quae supra nos caelo suspensa
 sublata sunt, neque quae infra terram profunda
 demersa sunt, aut scire sit datum aut ruspari re-
 ligiosum, et beati satis satisque prudentes iure
 videamur, si secundum illud vetus sapientis oraculum
 6 nosmet ipsos familiariter noverimus. Sed quatenus
 indulgentes insano atque inepto labori ultra humili-
 tatis nostrae terminos evagamur et in terram proiecti
 caelum ipsum et ipsa sidera audaci cupiditate tran-
 scendimus, vel hunc errorem saltem non vanis et
 7 formidulosis opinionibus implicemus. Sint prin-
 cipio omnium semina natura in se coeunte densata,
 quis hic auctor deus? Sint fortuitis concursibus

^a The γνῶθι σεαυτόν precept of the Delphic shrine.

^b The summary of Epicurean and Atomist philosophy is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, and Lucretius.

on our disputation rather than the product of your
 own feelings. So if you will please take your seat as 2
 a novice, ignorant as it were of either side of the case,
 it will be easy to make it clear, that in human affairs
 everything is doubtful, uncertain, and in suspense,
 everything a matter of probability rather than truth; 3
 it is no wonder that people, tired of deeply investigat-
 ing truth, should hastily yield to any random opinion,
 rather than with unremitting diligence persevere
 in the search. Everyone must feel indignant and 4
 annoyed that certain persons—persons untrained in
 study, uninitiated in letters, ignorant even of the
 meaner arts—should come to fixed conclusions upon
 the universe in its majesty, which through the centuries
 is to this day matter of debate in countless schools of
 philosophy. And no wonder, seeing that man's limited 5
 intelligence is so incapable of exploring God, that
 neither in the case of things above, suspended aloft
 in heaven, nor of things below the earth plunged be-
 neath the depths, is it given to him to know, or per-
 mitted to scrutinize, without irreverence. Sufficient
 be it for our happiness, and sufficient for our wisdom
 if, according to the ancient oracle of the wise man,^a
 we learn closer acquaintance with our own selves.
 But seeing that with mad and fruitless toil we over- 6
 step the limits of our humble intelligence, and from
 our earth-bound level seek, with audacious eagerness,
 to scale heaven itself and the stars of heaven, let us
 at least not aggravate our error by vain and terrifying
 imaginations.

"Suppose that in the beginning nature gathered 7
 the seeds of all things together,^b and formed them
 into a mass—what god was here the author? Or
 suppose that by their fortuitous clashing the elements

totius mundi membra coalita, digesta, formata, quis deus machinator? Sidera licet ignis accenderit et caelum licet sua materia suspenderit, licet terram fundaverit pondere et mare licet influxerit e liquore unde haec religio, unde formido, quae superstitio est?

8 Homo et animal omne quod nascitur, inspiratur, attollitur, elementorum ut voluntaria concretio est, in quae rursum homo et animal omne dividitur, solvitur, dissipatur: ita in fontem refluunt et in semet omnia revolvuntur, nullo artifice nec iudice

9 nec auctore. Sic congregatis ignium seminibus soles alios atque alios semper splendere, sic exhalatis terrae vaporibus nebulas semper adolescere, quibus densatis coactisque nubes altius surgere, isdem labentibus pluvias fluere, flare ventos, grandines increpare, vel nimbis conidentibus tonitrua mugire, rutilare fulgora, fulmina praemicare: adeo passim cadunt, montes inruunt, arboribus incurrunt, sine dilectu tangunt loca sacra et profana, homines noxios feriunt

10 et saepe religiosos. Quid tempestates loquar varias et incertas, quibus nullo ordine vel examine rerum omnium impetus volutatur? in naufragiis bonorum malorumque fata mixta, merita confusa? in incendiis interitum convenire insontium nocentumque? et cum tabe pestifera caeli tractus inficitur, sine discrimine omnes deperire? et cum belli ardore saevitur,

11 meliores potius occumbere? In pace etiam non tantum aequatur nequitia melioribus, sed et colitur, ut in pluribus nescias, utrum sit eorum detestanda

of the universe combined, took order and shape—what god was the artificer? Fire may have kindled the stars; the nature of its material have suspended heaven on high, founded the earth by its weight, drained moisture into the sea—if so, what ground is there for religion, for terror and superstitious dread? Man and each living thing is born, lives, grows up; 8 consists of a spontaneous combination of elements, into which once again man and every living thing is separated, resolved and dispersed; so all things flow back to their source, and return unto themselves without artificer, or arbiter, or author of their being. So by the gathering together of the seeds of fire, 9 new and ever new suns continually shine; so by the exhalation of earth's vapours mists continually grow, and by their condensation and combination clouds rise on high; and as they drop, rains fall, winds blow, hailstorms rattle; as the storm-clouds collide, thunders growl, lightning flashes, thunderbolts dart; yes and they fall at random, hurtle down upon the mountains, charge trees, smite without distinction places sacred or profane; strike guilty men or often enough the god-fearing. Why tell of tempests capricious and uncertain, which without rule or rhyme bring havoc in their wake? or how in shipwrecks the fates of the good and of the evil are confounded, and their deserts confused? in fires, of indiscriminate destruction of the innocent and of the guilty? or, when some region of the sky is infected with the blight of pestilence, how all perish without distinction? In the rage and heat of battle, how the better men are first to fall? In peace too, not only does 11 rascality run level with virtue, but wins such respect that half the times one does not know whether to

^a οὐ γὰρ Ἀρης ἀγαθῶν φείδεται ἀλλὰ κακῶν.

12 *pravitas an optanda felicitas. Quod si mundus divina providentia et alicuius numinis auctoritate regeretur, numquam mereretur Phalaris et Dionysius regnum, numquam Rutilius et Camillus exilium, numquam*
 13 *Socrates venenum. Ecce arbusta frugifera, ecce iam seges cana, iam temulenta vindemia imbri corrumpitur, grandine caeditur. Adeo aut incerta nobis veritas occultatur et premitur, aut, quod magis credendum est, variis et lubricis casibus soluta legibus fortuna dominatur.*

1 VI. "Cum igitur aut fortuna certa aut incerta natura sit, quanto venerabilius ac melius antistitem veritatis maiorum excipere disciplinam, religiones traditas colere, deos, quos a parentibus ante inbutus es timere quam nosse familiarius, adorare, nec de numinibus ferre sententiam, sed prioribus credere, qui adhuc rudi saeculo in ipsius mundi natalibus meruerunt deos vel faciles habere vel reges! Inde adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida videmus singulos sacrorum ritus gentiles habere et deos colere municipes, ut Eleusinos Cererem, Phrygas Matrem, Epidauros Aesculapium, Chaldaeos Belum, Astarten

^a Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum 570–554 B.C., was said to have burned his victims alive in a brazen bull.

^b Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse 405–367 B.C., was regarded as the typical tyrant by Cicero, Plutarch and others.

^c P. Rutilius Rufus, consul 105 B.C., exposed the extortions of the *publicani* in Asia. In revenge they prosecuted him for malversation, and he was sent into exile 92 B.C.

^d M. Furius Camillus, the conqueror of Veii 396 B.C., was accused of misappropriation of the spoils and retired into voluntary exile.

^e Socrates was convicted by an Athenian jury on a charge

detest their depravity or to envy their good fortune. But if the world were governed by divine providence 12 and the authority of some deity, Phalaris ^a and Dionysius ^b would never have deserved a throne, Rutilius ^c and Camillus ^d exile, or Socrates ^e the hemlock. See, the trees laden with fruit, the corn already 13 white to harvest, the vineyard heavy with wine—ruined by rain or cut with hail. So hidden from our eyes and overlaid is the uncertain truth, or—as seems more credible—lawless chance, with tricky and haphazard accidents, rules over all.

VI. "Seeing then that either chance is certain,^f or 1 nature uncertain, how much more reverent and better it is to accept the teaching of our elders as the priest of truth; to maintain the religions handed down to us; to adore the gods, whom from the cradle you were taught to fear rather than to know familiarly; not to dogmatize about divinities, but to believe our forefathers who, in an age still rude, in the world's nativity, were privileged to regard gods as kindly or as kings! Hence it is that throughout wide empires, provinces and towns, we see each people having its own individual rites and worshipping its local gods, the Eleusinians Ceres,^g the Phrygians the Great Mother,^h the Epidaurians Aesculapius,ⁱ the of "corrupting the youth," and condemned to death by drinking hemlock, 399 B.C.

^f MS. reads *certa*, but *caeca* "blind" is more probably correct.

^g The Eleusinian Mysteries, celebrated at Eleusis (near Athens), originating in nature worship, were associated with Demeter, the Earth-Mother.

^h Phrygia was the home of the worship of Cybele, the "Great Mother" of gods and all procreative life.

ⁱ The most famous temple of Asclepius, god of healing, was at Epidauros in Argolis.

Syros, Dianam Tauros, Gallos Mercurium, universa
 2 Romanos. Sic eorum potestas et auctoritas totius
 orbis ambitus occupavit, sic imperium suum ultra
 solis vias et ipsius oceani limites propagavit,
 dum exercent in armis virtutem religiosam, dum
 urbem muniunt sacrorum religionibus, castis virgini-
 bus, multis honoribus ac nominibus sacerdotum, dum
 obsessi et citra solum Capitolium capti colunt deos,
 quos alius iam sprevisset iratos, et per Gallorum acies
 mirantium superstitionis audaciam pergunt telis
 inermes, sed cultu religionis armati, dum captis in
 hostilibus moenibus adhuc ferociente victoria numina
 victa venerantur, dum undique hospites deos quaerunt
 et suos faciunt, dum aras extruunt etiam ignotis
 3 numinibus et Manibus. Sic, dum universarum
 gentium sacra suscipiunt, etiam regna meruerunt.
 Hinc perpetuus venerationis tenor mansit, qui longa
 aetate non infringitur, sed augetur: quippe antiquitas
 caerimoniis atque fanis tantum sanctitatis tribuere
 consuevit quantum adstruxerit vetustatis.

^a Belus—Bel or Baal—was the generic name for the local deities or “lords” of Chaldaeans, Phoenicians and other Semitic stocks.

^b Astarte, or Ashtoreth, was the most prominent of Phoenician goddesses at Tyre, Sidon, Cyprus, Carthage and elsewhere.

^c The Tauri are the people of the Tauric Chersonese, the Crimea, where Iphigenia became priestess to the local goddess, identified with Greek Artemis.

^d From Virg. *Aen.* vi. 795 “extra anni solisque vias . . . proferet imperium.”

^e C. Fabius Dorso, in order to perform certain religious rites of the Fabian gens, proceeded to the Quirinal in sacrificial robes, and bearing the sacred vessels, passed through the ranks of the besieging Gauls, and returned unharmed (Livy, v. 46).

Chaldaeans Bel,^a the Syrians Astarte,^b the Taurians^c Diana, the Gauls Mercury, the Romans one and all. Thus it is that their power and authority has em- 2
 braced the circuit of the whole world, and has ad-
 vanced the bounds of empire beyond the paths of
 the sun,^d and the confines of ocean; while they prac-
 tise in the field god-fearing valour, make strong their
 city with awe of sacred rites, with chaste virgins, with
 many a priestly dignity and title; besieged and im-
 prisoned within the limits of the Capitol, they still rev-
 erenced the gods, whom others might have spurned
 as wrath, and through the ranks of Gauls amazed at
 their undaunted superstition passed on armed not
 with weapons but with godly reverence and fear^e;
 in captured fortresses, even in the first flush of victory,
 they reverence the conquered deities; everywhere
 they entertain the gods and adopt them as their
 own^f; while they raise altars even to the unknown
 deities, and to the spirits of the dead. Thus is it that 3
 they adopt the sacred rites of all nations, and withal
 have earned dominion. Hence the course of worship
 has continued without break, not impaired but
 strengthened by the lapse of time; for indeed anti-
 quity is wont to attach to ceremonies and to temples
 a sanctity proportioned to the length of their con-
 tinuance.

^f It was the practice, before an enemy's city was attacked, for Roman priests according to a prescribed formula to invoke its tutelar gods, inviting them to leave it and to come to Rome, where they would receive equal or fuller worship (Pliny, *N.H.* xxviii. 4). Thus Camillus (Livy, v. 21-22) before Veii invokes Apollo and Juno. Macrobius (*Sat.* iii. 9) preserves a long ritual formula (*carmen*), or “evocation,” addressed to the tutelary gods of Carthage, and concluding with the offer of a temple and games.

- 1 VII. "Nec tamen temere (ausim enim interim et ipse concedere et sic melius errare) maiores nostri aut observandis auguriis aut extis consulendis aut instituendis sacris aut delubris dedicandis operam
2 navaverunt. Specta de libris memoriam; iam eos deprehendes initiassse ritus omnium religionum, vel ut remuneraretur divina indulgentia, vel ut averteretur imminens ira aut iam tumens et saeviens
3 placaretur. Testis Mater Idaea, quae adventu suo et probavit matronae castitatem et urbem metu hostili liberavit; testes equestrium fratrum in lacu, sicut *se* ostenderant, statuæ consecratae, qui anheli spumantibus equis atque fumantibus de Perse victoriam eadem die qua fecerant nuntiaverunt; testis ludorum offensi Iovis de somnio plebei hominis iteratio: et Deciorum devotio rata testis est; testis et Curtius, qui equitis sui vel mole vel honore hiatum
4 profundae voraginis coaequavit. Frequentius etiam, quam volebamus, deorum praesentiam contempta

^a Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 191-280, recounts the story. In 204 B.C., to secure the evacuation of Italy by the Carthaginians, the black stone of Cybele was transported from Pessinus in Asia Minor. The vessel stranded at the mouth of the Tiber, and the soothsayers declared that nothing but the virtue of a perfectly chaste woman could release it. When Claudia Quinta, a maiden whose chastity had been called in question, attached a rope to the vessel, it followed on to its destination.

^b The decisive defeat of Perses, last King of Macedonia, at Pydna, took place in 168 B.C. The statues of the twin horsemen, Castor and Pollux, were placed beside the Lake Juturna in the Forum, where they had previously appeared in 502 B.C., to announce the victory over the Latins at Lake Regillus.

^c Titus Latinus, a plebeian, was bidden in a dream to warn the consuls to renew the Ludi Romani. Disregarding a thrice-repeated intimation, he was smitten with illness; but on fulfilling the mandate was restored to health.

VII. "It was not at mere random—though here 1 I might venture to concede a point and go wrong in good company—that our ancestors devoted their attention to observing auguries, to consulting entrails, to instituting sacrifices, or dedicating shrines. Look at the written records; you will find that all 2 religious rites originated either to secure the reward of divine approval or to avert impending anger, or to propitiate its swelling rage and fury. Witness the 3 Idaean Mother who at her coming vindicated a matron's chastity and freed the city from fear of the enemy^a; witness the statues of the horsemen brothers^b consecrated, even as they appeared, in the lake waters, who, breathless on their foaming and smoking steeds, announced the victory over Perses on the same day on which they had achieved it; witness the revival of the games in honour of offended Jupiter, thanks to the dream of a common plebeian^c; witness the devotion of the Decii, ratified by Heaven^d; and witness too Curtius and the gulf, whose yawning mouth^e horse and rider, or the honour due to their devotion, closed. Only too often con- 4 tempt for the auspices has attested the presence of

^a P. Decius Mus, the consul, having dreamed that in the Latin War (340 B.C.) the general on one side and the army on the other would perish, devoted himself and the Latin army to the gods below. He was slain, and the Romans were victorious. His son showed similar devotion in the Third Samnite War (295 B.C.).

^e In 365 B.C. a great gulf opened in the Forum, and the seers declared that it would remain for ever unless Rome's most precious possession was thrown in. M. Curtius, a noble Roman youth, saying that nothing was so precious as a brave man, mounted his horse, and in full armour leapt in. The Lacus Curtius permanently marked the spot.

auspicia contestata sunt. Sic Allia "nomen infaustum," sic Claudii et Iunii non proelium in Poenos, sed feroce naufragium est, et ut Trasimene Romanorum sanguine et maior esset et decolor, spreuit auguria Flaminius, et ut Parthos signa repetamus, dirarum imprecationes Crassus et meruit
5 et inrisit. Omitto vetera quae multa sunt, et de deorum natalibus, donis, muneribus neglego carmina poetarum, praedicta etiam de oraculis fata transilio, ne vobis antiquitas nimium fabulosa videatur. Intende templis ac delubris deorum, quibus Romana civitas et protegitur et ornatur: magis sunt augusta numinibus incolis, praesentibus, inquilinis quam
6 cultu, insignibus et muneribus opulenta. Inde adeo pleni et mixti deo vates futura praecerpunt, dant cautelam periculis, morbis medellam, spem afflictis, opem miseris, solacium calamitatibus, laboribus levamentum. Etiam per quietem deos videmus, audimus, agnoscimus, quos impie per diem negamus, nolumus, peieramus.

1 VIII. "Itaque cum omnium gentium de diis immortalibus, quamvis incerta sit vel ratio vel origo, maneat tamen firma consensio, neminem fero tanta

^a The Allia, a small river twelve miles from Rome, was the scene of the defeat by the Gauls under Brennus in 390 B.C. The battle was fought on an inauspicious day, that following the Ides.

^b P. Claudius Pulcher and L. Junius Pullus, consuls in 249 B.C., suffered naval disaster in the First Punic War, the former by defeat, and the latter by a tempest. When warned by the keeper of the sacred chickens that they would not feed, "Then let them drink," replied the consul, and threw them into the sea.

^c C. Flaminius commanded, and fell, at the battle of Lake

the gods. So with the Allia ^a of 'ill-omened name'; so with the fleet of Claudius and Junius, not in action against the Carthaginians, but in disastrous wreck ^b; and did not Trasimene run red with blood of Romans because Flaminius despised the auguries ^c? And had we not to reclaim our standards from the Parthians because Crassus dared and derided the imprecations of the Dread Goddesses? ^d I omit old
5 instances, not a few; I take no account of the songs of the poets touching the births of gods, their gifts and their rewards; I pass predictions of fate conveyed by oracles, for fear of your regarding antique lore as fabulous. Turn your gaze on the temples and shrines of gods by which the commonwealth of Rome is protected and adorned: they owe more to the presence and the tenancy of the deities who dwell therein than to the worship, the decorations and the votive gifts with which they are enriched. Hence it is
6 that prophets, filled and inspired by God, anticipate the future, give warning in perils, healing in disease, hope to the afflicted, help to the wretched, solace in calamity, and in toil alleviation. Even in sleep we see, hear, and recognize the gods, whom by day we impiously deny, reject and mock with false oaths.

VIII. "Therefore, since all nations unhesitatingly agree as to the existence of the immortal gods, however uncertain may be our account of them or of their origin, it is intolerable that any man should be

Trasimene. His previous contempt for religious observances was notorious (Livy, xxii. 3; Cic. *De Div.* i. 35).

^d When M. Lic. Crassus was setting out on his expedition against Parthia, in which he was defeated at Carrhae in 53 B.C. with the loss of Roman standards, the tribune Ateius, after performing certain rites, devoted C. to the Furies if he proceeded.

audacia tamque inreligiosa nescio qua prudentia tumescentem, qui hanc religionem tam vetustam, tam utilem, tam salubrem dissolvere aut infirmare
 2 nitatur. Sit licet ille Theodorus Cyrenaeus, vel qui prior Diagoras Melius, cui Atheon cognomen adposuit antiquitas, qui uterque nullos deos adseverando timorem omnem, quo humanitas regitur, veneratio- nemque penitus sustulerunt: numquam tamen in hac impietatis disciplina simulatae philosophiae
 3 nomine atque auctoritate pollebunt. Cum Abderiten Protagoram Athenienses viri consulte potius quam profane de divinitate disputantem et expulerint suis finibus et in contione eius scripta deusserint, quid? homines (sustinebitis enim me impetum susceptae actionis liberius exerentem) homines, inquam, deploratae, inlicitae ac desperatae factionis grassari
 4 in deos non ingemescendum est? Qui de ultima faece collectis imperitioribus et mulieribus credulis sexus sui facilitate labentibus plebem profanae coniurationis instituunt, quae nocturnis congregationibus et ieiuniis sollemnibus et inhumanis cibis non sacro quodam, sed piaculo foederatur, latebrosa et lucifuga natio, in publicum muta, in angulis garrula, templa ut busta despiciunt, deos despuunt, rident sacra, miserentur miseri (si fas est) sacerdotum, honores et purpuras despiciunt, ipsi seminudi!
 5 Pro mira stultitia et incredibilis audacia! spernunt tormenta praesentia, dum incerta metuunt et futura,

^a Diagoras of Melos, at the close of the fifth century B.C., and Theodorus the Cyrenaic, at the close of the fourth century, both earned the designation *Atheist*.

so puffed up with pride and impious conceit of wisdom, as to strive to abolish or undermine religion, so ancient, so useful, and so salutary. He may be a Theodorus 2 of Cyrene,^a or an earlier Diagoras of Melos, called Atheist by antiquity, who both alike, by asserting that there were no gods, cut at the root of all the fear and reverence by which mankind is governed; yet will they never establish their impious tenets under the name and authority of pretended philosophy.

“When Protagoras of Abdera,^b by way of debate 3 rather than of profanity, discussed the godhead, the men of Athens expelled him from their borders, and burned his writings in the market-place. Is it not then deplorable that a gang—excuse my vehemence in using strong language for the cause I advocate—a gang, I say, of discredited and proscribed desperadoes band themselves against the gods? Fellows 4 who gather together illiterates from the dregs of the populace and credulous women with the instability natural to their sex, and so organize a rabble of profane conspirators, leagued together by meetings at night and ritual fasts and unnatural repasts, not for any sacred service but for piacular rites, a secret tribe that shuns the light, silent in the open, but talkative in hid corners; they despise temples as if they were tombs; they spit upon the gods; they jeer at our sacred rites; pitiable themselves, they pity (save the mark) our priests; they despise titles and robes of honour, going themselves half-naked! What 5 a pitch of folly! what wild impertinence! present tortures they despise, yet dread those of an uncertain

^b Protagoras the Sophist, 490-415, was banished from Athens for impiety, probably in 415 B.C.

et dum mori post mortem timent, interim mori non timent : ita illis pavorem fallax spes solacia rediviva blanditur !

1 IX. "Ac iam, ut fecundius nequiora proveniunt, serpentibus in dies perditis moribus per universum orbem sacraria ista tæterrima impiae coitionis
2 adolescunt. Eruenda prorsus haec et execranda consensio. Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo paene antequam noverint : passim etiam inter eos velut quaedam libidinum religio miscetur, ac se promise appellunt fratres et sorores, ut etiam non insolens stuprum intercessione sacri nominis fiat incestum. Ita eorum vana et demens
3 superstitio sceleribus gloriatur. Nec de ipsis, nisi subsisteret veritas, maxime nefaria et honore praefanda sagax fama loqueretur. Audio eos turpissimae pecudis caput asini consecratum inepta nescio qua
4 persuasione venerari : digna et nata religio talibus moribus ! Alii eos ferunt ipsius antistitis ac sacerdotis colere genitalia et quasi parentis sui adorare naturam : nescio an falsa, certe occultis ac nocturnis
5 sacris adposita suspicio ! Et qui hominem summo supplicio pro facinore punitum et crucis ligna feralia eorum caerimonias fabulatur, congruentia perditis sceleratisque tribuit altaria, ut id colant quod merentur. Iam de initiandis tirunculis fabula tam detestanda quam nota est. Infans farre contextus, ut decipiat incautos, adponitur ei qui sacris inbuatur.

^a This senseless scandal, according to Tac. *Hist.* v. 3. 4, was first charged against the Jews, called *Asinari*. Tertullian, *Apol.* ch. 16, deals with it at length. Its popular currency is attested by the rude *graffito* found on the Palatine, where one Alexamenos is depicted adoring a crucified figure with the head of an ass.

^b On sacramental eating of the god, and representation

future ; death after death they fear, but death in the present they fear not : for them illusive hope charms away terror with assurances of a life to come.

IX. "Already—for ill weeds grow apace—decay of 1 morals grows from day to day, and throughout the wide world the abominations of this impious confederacy multiply. Root and branch it must be exterminated and accursed. They recognize one another 2 by secret signs and marks ; they fall in love almost before they are acquainted ; everywhere they introduce a kind of religion of lust, a promiscuous 'brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' by which ordinary fornication, under cover of a hallowed name, is converted to incest. And thus their vain and foolish 3 superstition makes an actual boast of crime. For themselves, were there not some foundation of truth, shrewd rumour would not impute gross and unmentionable forms of vice. I am told that under some idiotic impulse they consecrate and worship the head of an ass, the meanest of all beasts,^a a religion worthy of the morals which gave it birth. Others say that they 4 actually reverence the private parts of their director and high-priest, and adore his organs as parent of their being. This may be false, but such suspicions naturally attach to their secret and nocturnal rites. To say that a malefactor put to death for his crimes, and wood of the death-dealing cross, are objects of their veneration is to assign fitting altars to abandoned wretches and the kind of worship they deserve. De- 5 tails of the initiation of neophytes are as revolting as they are notorious. An infant, cased in dough^b to deceive the unsuspecting, is placed beside the

of the god by dough cakes and other symbols, see Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (abridged), pp. 480-494.

Is infans a tirunculo farris superficie quasi ad innoxios
ictus provocato caecis occultisque vulneribus occiditur.
Huius, pro nefas! sitienter sanguinem lambunt,
huius certatim membra dispertiant, hac foederantur
hostia, hac conscientia sceleris ad silentium mutuum
pignerantur. Haec sacra sacrilegiis omnibus tae-
6 triora. Et de convivio notum est; passim omnes
locuntur, id etiam Cirtensis nostri testatur oratio.
Ad epulas sollemni die coeunt cum omnibus liberis,
sororibus, matribus, sexus omnis homines et omnis
aetatis. Illic post multas epulas, ubi convivium
caluit et incestae libidinis ebriatis fervor exarsit, canis
qui candelabro nexus est, iactu offulae ultra spatium
lineae, qua vinctus est, ad impetum et saltum pro-
7 vocatur. Sic everso et extincto conscio lumine
inpuidentibus tenebris nexus infandae cupiditatis
involvunt per incertum sortis, etsi non omnes opera,
conscientia tamen pariter incesti, quoniam voto
universorum adpetitur quicquid accidere potest in
actu singulorum.

1 X. " Multa praetereo consulto : nam et haec nimis
multa sunt, quae aut omnia aut pleraque omnium
vera declarat ipsius pravae religionis obscuritas.
2 Cur etenim occultare et abscondere quicquid illud
colunt magnopere nituntur, cum honesta semper
publico gaudeant, scelera secreta sint? cur nullas

^a Tert. *Apol.* 2 and 7, on these "Thyestean meals."

^b Tert. *Apol.* 9.

^c M. Corn. Fronto, referred to again in ch. 31 as *tuus* *Fronto*, was born at Cirta in Numidia, but as a young man repaired to Rome, and there attracted the notice of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 117-138. He became the most admired of rhetoricians, and enjoyed the favour and friendship of successive Emperors, acting as teacher in rhetoric to Marcus Aurelius, and later to his son Commodus. In 143

person to be initiated. The novice is thereupon induced to inflict what seem to be harmless blows upon the dough, and unintentionally the infant is killed ^a by his unsuspecting blows; the blood—oh, horrible—they lap up greedily; the limbs they tear to pieces eagerly; and over the victim they make league and covenant, and by complicity in guilt pledge themselves to mutual silence.^b Such sacred rites are more foul than any sacrilege. Their form of feasting is 6 notorious; it is in everyone's mouth, as testified by the speech of our friend of Cirta.^c On the day appointed they gather at a banquet with all their children, sisters, and mothers, people of either sex and every age. There, after full feasting, when the blood is heated and drink has inflamed the passions of incestuous lust, a dog which has been tied to a lamp is tempted by a morsel thrown beyond the range of his tether to bound forward with a rush.^d The tale-telling light is upset and extinguished, and 7 in the shameless dark lustful embraces are indiscriminately exchanged; and all alike, if not in act, yet by complicity, are involved in incest, as anything that occurs by the act of individuals results from the common intention.

X. " Much I purposely pass over; I have said more 1 than enough of things most or all of which are true, as is shown by the secrecy of this depraved religion. Why make such efforts to obscure and conceal what- 2 ever is the object of their worship, when things honourable always rejoice in publicity, while guilt

he served a five-months' tenure of the consulship. His latest letter bears date A.D. 166; of his *Speech against the Christians* nothing survives.

^d Exploited in full, Tert. *Apol.* 7. 1; 8. 7.

aras habent, templa nulla, nulla nota simulacra, numquam palam loqui, numquam libere congregari, nisi illud, quod colunt et interprimunt, aut puniendum est aut pudendum? Unde autem vel quis ille aut ubi deus unicus, solitarius, destitutus, quem non gens libera, non regna, non saltem Romana superstitione noverunt? Iudaeorum sola et misera gentilitas unum et ipsi deum, sed palam, sed templis, aris, victimis caerimoniisque coluerunt, cuius adeo nulla vis nec potestas est, ut sit Romanis hominibus cum sua sibi natione captivus. At etiam Christiani quanta monstra, quae portenta confingunt! Deum illum suum, quem nec ostendere possunt nec videre, in omnium mores, actus omnium, verba denique et occultas cogitationes diligenter inquirere, discurrentem scilicet atque ubique praesentem: molestum illum volunt, inquietum, impudenter etiam curiosum, siquidem adstat factis omnibus, locis omnibus intererrat, cum nec singulis inservire possit per universa districtus nec universis sufficere in singulis occupatus.

XI. "Quid quod toto orbi et ipsi mundo cum sideribus suis minantur incendium, ruinam moliuntur, quasi aut naturae divinis legibus constitutus aeternus ordo turbetur, aut, rupto elementorum omnium foedere et caelesti conpage divisa, moles ista, qua continetur et cingitur, subruatur? Nec hac furiosa opinione contenti aniles fabulas adstruunt et adnectunt: renasci se ferunt post mortem et

loves secrecy? Why have they no altars, no temples, no recognized images? Why do they never speak in public, never meet in the open, if it be not that the object of their worship and their concealment is either criminal or shameful?

"Whence, who, or where is He, the One and only God, solitary, forlorn, whom no free nation, no kingdom, no superstition known to Rome has knowledge of? The miserable Jewish nationality did indeed worship one God, but even so openly, in temples, with altars, victims, and ceremonies; yet one so strengthless and powerless that he and his dear tribe with him are in captivity to Rome. And yet again what monstrous absurdities these Christians invent about this God of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see! that he searches diligently into the ways and deeds of all men, yea even their words and hidden thoughts, hurrying to and fro, ubiquitously; they make him out a troublesome, restless, shameless and interfering being, who has a hand in everything that is done, interlopes at every turn, and can neither attend to particulars because he is distracted with the whole, nor to the whole because he is engaged with particulars.

XI. "Further, they threaten the whole world and the universe and its stars with destruction by fire, as though the eternal order of nature established by laws divine could be put to confusion, or as though the bonds of all the elements could be broken, the framework of heaven be split in twain, and the containing and surrounding mass be brought down in ruin. Not content with this insane idea, they embellish and embroider it with old wives' tales; say that they are born anew after death from the cinders

- cineres et favillas et nescio qua fiducia mendaciis suis invicem credunt: putes eos iam revixisse.
- 3 Anceps malum et gemina dementia, caelo et astris, quae sic relinquimus, ut invenimus, interitum denuntiare, sibi mortuis extinctis, qui sicut nascimur et
- 4 interimus, aeternitatem repromittere! Inde videlicet et execrantur rogos et damnant ignium sepulturas, quasi non omne corpus, etsi flammissubtrahatur, annis tamen et aetatibus in terram resolvatur, nec intersit, utrum ferae diripiant an maria consumant an humus contegat an flamma subducat, cum cadaveribus omnis sepultura, si sentiunt, poena sit, si non sentiunt, ipsa conficiendi celeritate medicina.
- 5 Hoc errore decepti beatam sibi, ut bonis, et perpetem vitam mortui pollicentur, ceteris, ut iniustis, poenam sempiternam. Multa ad haec subpetunt, ni festinet oratio. Iniustos ipsos magis nec laboro; iam docui: quamquam, etsi iustos darem, culpam tamen vel innocentiam *novi* fato tribui sentiis plurimorum.
- 6 Et haec vestra consensio est; nam quicquid agimus, ut alii fato ita vos deo dicitis: sic sectae vestrae non spontaneos cupere, sed electos. Igitur iniquum iudicem fingitis qui sortem in hominibus puniat, non voluntatem.
- 7 "Vellem tamen sciscitari, utrumne cum corporibus *an absque corporibus*, et corporibus quibus, ipsisne an innovatis resurgatur. Sine corpore? hoc, quod
- 342

and the ashes, and with a strange unaccountable confidence believe in one another's lies: you might suppose they had already come to life again. One 3 perversion and folly matches the other. Against heaven and the stars, which we leave even as we found them, they denounce destruction; for themselves when dead and gone, creatures born to perish, the promise of eternity! Hence no doubt their de- 4 nunciation of funeral pyres and of cremation, just as though the body, even though spared the flame, would not in the course of years and ages be resolved into dust; and just as though it mattered whether it is torn to pieces by wild beasts or drowned in the sea, or buried in the ground, or consumed in the flame; for corpses, if they have sensation, must find all interment painful; while if they have not, speed of dispatch is the best treatment. Under this de- 5 lusion they promise themselves, as virtuous, a life of never-ending bliss after death; to all others, as evil-doers, everlasting punishment.

"Much might be added on this subject, but my discourse must hasten to its end. That they themselves are evil-doers I need not labour to prove; I have already shown it; though even if I grant their well-doing, guilt or innocence is usually, I know, attributed to destiny. And here we have your agreement; for 6 all action which others ascribe to fate, you ascribe to God; followers of your sect are moved not by their own free-will, but by election; and thus you invent an unjust judge, to punish men for their bad luck, not for their use of will.

"Here I should like to ask whether the resurrection 7 is with bodies or without bodies, and if so, with what bodies, their own or made anew? Without a body?

sciam, neque mens neque anima nec vita est. Ipso corpore? sed iam ante dilapsum est. Alio corpore? ergo homo novus nascitur, non prior ille reparatur. Et tamen tanta aetas abiit, saecula innumera fluxerunt: quis unus ullus ab inferis vel Protesilai sorte remeavit, horarum saltem permissio commeatu, vel ut exemplo crederemus? Omnia ista figmenta male sanae opinionis et inepta solacia a poetis fallacibus in dulcedinem carminis lusa a vobis nimirum credulis in deum vestrum turpiter reformata sunt.

XII. "Nec saltem de praesentibus capitis experimentum, quam vos inritae pollicitationis cassa vota decipiant: quid post mortem impendeat, miseri, dum adhuc vivitis, aestimate. Ecce pars vestrum et maior, melior, ut dicitis, egetis algetis, opere fame laboratis, et deus patitur dissimulat, non vult aut non potest opitulari suis; ita aut invalidus aut iniquus est! Tu, qui immortalitatem postumam somnias, cum periculo quateris, cum febribus ureris, cum dolore laceraris, nondum condicionem tuam sentis? nondum agnoscis fragilitatem? invitus miser infirmitatis argueris nec fateris!

"Sed omitto communia. Ecce vobis minae, supplicia, tormenta, et iam non adorandae sed subeundae cruces, ignes etiam quos et praedicitis et timetis: ubi deus ille, qui subvenire revivescentibus potest, viventibus non potest? Nonne Romani sine vestro deo imperant regnant, fruuntur orbe toto vestrique

^a In the expedition against Troy Protesilaus was first of the Greeks to set foot on shore. As predicted by the oracle, this entailed his death; but by favour of the gods he was granted a three hours' return to life, to bid farewell to his wife Laodamia.

That means, so far as I know, neither mind, nor soul, nor life. With the same body? But that has already gone to pieces. With another body? in that case a new man is born, and not the former man renewed. And yet though time has come and gone, and innumerable ages have flowed on, what single individual has ever returned from the lower regions even with the Protesilaus^a privilege of a few hours' furlough, so that we might have one example to trust? Your figments of diseased imagination and the futile fairy-tales invented by poets' fancy to give sweetness to their song have been rehashed by your credulity into the service of your God.

XII. "You do not anyhow allow your experiences of the present to undeceive your vain desires of promissory expectation. Let present life, poor fools, be your gauge of what happens after death. See how some part of you, the greater and the better part as you say, suffer want, cold, toil, hunger; and yet your God permits and seems to overlook it; he is unwilling or unable to help his own; consequently he is either powerless or unjust. You dream of posthumous immortality; when unnerved by danger, when parched with fever, when racked with pain, can you not be sensible of your condition? recognize your feebleness? against your will, poor fool, you are convicted of weakness, and yet will not admit it!

"Things, however, common to all I pass over: but for you there stand in wait punishments, tortures, crosses (crosses not for adoration, but for endurance), yes and the flames which you foretell and fear; where is the God who will succour you in the next life, but in this life cannot? Have not the Romans without your God empire and rule, do they not enjoy the whole

dominantur? Vos vero suspensi interim atque solliciti honestis voluptatibus abstinete: non spectacula visitis, non pompis interestis, convivia publica absque vobis; sacra certamina, praecertatos cibos et delibatos altaris potus abhorretis. Sic re-
 6 formidatis deos quos negatis! Non floribus caput nectitis, non corpus odoribus honestatis; reservatis unguenta funeribus, coronas etiam sepulcris denegatis, pallidi trepidi, misericordia digni, sed nostrorum deorum. Ita nec resurgitis miseri nec interim vivitis!

7 Proinde si quid sapientiae vobis aut verecundiae est, desinite caeli plagas et mundi fata et secreta rimari: satis est pro pedibus aspicere maxime indoctis inpolitis, rudibus agrestibus, quibus non est datum intellegere civilia, multo magis denegatum est disserere divina.

1 XIII. "Quamquam si philosophandi libido est, Socraten, sapientiae principem, quisque vestrum tantus est, si potuerit, imitetur. Eius viri, quotiens de caelestibus rogabatur, nota responsio est: 'quod
 2 supra nos, nihil ad nos.' Merito ergo de oraculo testimonium meruit prudentiae singularis. Quod oraculum, idem ipse persensit, idcirco universis esse praepositum, non quod omnia comperisset, sed quod nihil se scire didicisset: ita confessae inperitiae
 3 summa prudentia est. Hoc fonte defluxit Arcesilae et multo post Carneadis et Academicorum plu-

^a The contention of Socrates was that such speculations had no bearing upon morals. The form of oracle cited by Diog. Laert. II. 37 ἀνδρῶν πάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος is clearly apocryphal.

^b Arcesilas (315–240 B.C.) was regarded as founder of the second or Middle Academy, and Carneades (213–129 B.C.) of the New. Arcesilas taught suspension of judgement; Carneades degrees of probability.

world, and lord it over you? Meanwhile in anxious doubt you deny yourselves wholesome pleasures; you do not attend the shows; you take no part in the processions; fight shy of public banquets; abhor the sacred games, meats from the victims, drinks poured in libation on the altars. So frightened are you of the gods whom you deny! You twine no
 6 blossoms for the head, grace the body with no perfumes; you reserve your unguents for funerals; refuse garlands even to the graves, pale, trembling creatures, objects for pity—but the pity of our gods! Poor wretches, for whom there is no life hereafter, yet who live not for to-day.

Well then, if you have any sense or modesty, have 7 done with prying into the regions of the sky, into the destiny and secrets of the universe; enough for the ignorant and uncultured, the rude and boorish, to look at what is under their nose; those who are not privileged to understand things civic are still less qualified to discuss things divine.

XIII. "Yet, if philosophize you must, let any that is 1 equal to the task imitate if he can Socrates, the prince of wisdom. When questioned about things in heaven his famous answer ran, 'that which is above us, does not concern us.'^a Well did he deserve the 2 testimonial of the oracle to his superior wisdom. The reason, as he himself divined, why the oracle set him before all others, was not that he had found out the meaning of everything, but that he had learned that he knew nothing; so surely is the confession of ignorance the highest wisdom. From this source 3 flowed the guarded scepticism of Arcesilas, and later of Carneades ^b and most of the Academic school, on

rimorum in summis quaestionibus tuta dubitatio, quo genere philosophari et caute indocti possunt
 4 et docti gloriose. Quid? Simonidis Melici nonne admiranda omnibus et sectanda cunctatio? Qui Simonides, cum de eo, quid et quales arbitretur deos, ab Hierone tyranno quaereretur, primo deliberationi diem petiit, postridie biduum prorogavit, mox alterum tantum admonitus adiunxit. Postremo, cum causas tantae morae tyrannus inquireret, respondit ille 'quod sibi, quanto inquisitio tardior
 5 pergeret, tanto veritas fieret obscurior.' Mea quoque opinione quae sunt dubia, ut sunt, relinquenda sunt, nec, tot ac tantis viris deliberantibus, temere et audaciter in alteram partem ferenda sententia est, ne aut anilis inducatur superstitio aut omnis religio destruat.

1 XIV. Sic Caecilius et renidens (nam indignationis eius tumorem effusae orationis impetus relaxaverat): "Ecquid ad haec" ait "audet Octavius, homo Plautinae prosapiae, ut pistorum praecipuus, ita postremus philosophorum?"

2 "Parce," inquam, "in eum plaudere: neque enim prius exultare te dignum est concinnitate sermonis, quam utrimque plenius fuerit peroratum, maxime cum non laudi, set veritati disceptatio vestra nitatur.

3 Et quamquam magnum in modum me subtili varietate tua delectarit oratio, tamen altius moveor, non

*Simonides of Ceos (556-468 B.C.) was in the circle of Hiero of Syracuse. The story is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 22.

^b No good explanation of the personal allusion is forthcoming. Plautus, the Roman comedian, is said to have worked in a mill, and he uses the word *pistor* of those engaged in the milling and baking industries. It is quite

all the deepest questions: this is the kind of philosophy in which the unlearned may indulge with caution, the learned with distinction. May we not all admire and follow the hesitation of Simonides, the poet?^a When Hiero the tyrant asked him what he thought of the being and attributes of the gods, he first begged for a day for consideration, next day for two days more; then, on a new reminder, for yet another. Finally, when the tyrant asked his reasons for so much delay, he replied 'because to him, the longer the progress of the search, the more obscure became the truth.' To my mind 5 things that are doubtful, as they are, should be left in doubt, and, where so many and such great minds differ, rash and hasty votes should not be cast on either side for fear of countenancing old wives' superstition, or of subverting all religion."

XIV. Caecilius ended beaming, for the flow of his 1 oratory had relieved the swell of his indignation. "And now, what says our brave Octavius, of the good old Plautine stock, prince of bakers but last and least of philosophers?"^b

"No crowing over him," said I, "you had better 2 not plume yourself on your fine feathers, till both sides have been heard to a finish, especially as you are contending not for glory but for truth. Greatly 3 as your speech has delighted me in matter as well as manner, I am still more deeply impressed—not so

possible that Octavius had been in some way connected with the trade, and that this accounts for the turn of pleasantry. Attempts at emendation have been made—such as *istorum*, *Christianorum*, *ictorum*—but none of them seems happy, and all eliminate the alliterative *p*. Jokes are not intended for posterity.

de praesenti actione, sed de toto genere disputandi, quod plerumque pro disserentium viribus et eloquentiae potestate etiam perspicuae veritatis condicio mutetur. Id accidere pernotum est auditorum facilitate, qui dum verborum lenocinio a rerum intentionibus avocantur, sine dilectu adsentiantur dictis omnibus nec a rectis falsa secernunt, nescientes inesse et incredibile verum et verisimile mendacium.

Itaque, quo saepius adseverationibus credunt, eo frequentius a peritioribus arguuntur: sic adsidue temeritate decepti culpam iudicis tranferunt ad incerti querellam, ut damnatis omnibus malint universa suspendere quam de fallacibus iudicare.

Igitur nobis providendum est, ne odio identidem sermonum omnium laboremus ita, ut in execrationem et odium hominum plerique simpliciores efferantur. Nam incaute creduli circumveniuntur ab his quos bonos putaverunt: mox errore consimili iam suspectis omnibus ut improbos metuunt etiam quos optimos sentire potuerunt.

“Nos proinde solliciti, quod utrumque omni negotio disseratur et ex altera parte plerumque obscura sit veritas, ex altero latere mira subtilitas quae nonnumquam ubertate dicendi fidem confessae probationis imitetur, diligenter quantum potest singula ponderemus, ut argutias quidem laudare, ea vero quae recta sunt, eligere, probare, suscipere possimus.”

XV. “Decedis” inquit Caecilius “officio iudicis religiosi: nam periniurium est vires te actionis meae

much with reference to the present pleadings, as to discussion in general—by the way in which, as a rule, truth of the clearest kind is affected by the talents of the disputants and the power of eloquence. An audience, as everyone knows, is so easily swayed. Fascination of words distracts them from attention to facts, they give indiscriminating assent to all that is said; they fail to distinguish false from true, forgetting that the incredible contains an element of truth and probability an element of falsehood. The more often they believe asseverations, the more frequently they are put in the wrong by the clever; dupes of their own persistent rashness, they impute the incompetence of the judge to the score of uncertainty, and with wholesale condemnation prefer suspension of all judgement to fallible conclusions. Accordingly we must take good care that we are not to become the victims of a dislike of all arguments whatsoever, and so expose numbers of simple-minded people to general execration and odium. Careless credulity makes them the prey of those they trusted; and then they repeat their mistake by suspecting all alike, and distrusting the honesty even of those most entitled to their respect.

“We must therefore take every precaution: in every question there are arguments on both sides; on the one hand truth is generally obscure, on the other subtlety, by mere flow of words, sometimes usurps the credit of admitted proof. We must weigh each point as carefully as we can, that while admiring ingenuity we may be able to choose, approve, and accept what is correct.”

XV. “You are abandoning,” said Caecilius, “the rôle of a conscientious judge; it is grossly unfair to

intergressu gravissimae disputationis infringere, cum Octavius integra et inlibata habeat singula, si potest, refutare."

2 "Id quod criminariis" inquam "in commune, nisi fallor, compendium protuli, ut examine scrupuloso nostram sententiam non eloquentiae tumore, sed rerum ipsarum soliditate libremus. Nec advocanda, quod quereris, diutius intentio, cum toto silentio liceat responsionem Ianuari nostri iam gestientis audire."

1 XVI. Et Octavius: "Dicam equidem, ut potero, pro viribus, et adnitendum tibi mecum est, ut conviciorum amarissimam labem verborum veracium flumine diluamus.

"Nec dissimulabo principio ita Natalis mei errantem, vagam, lubricam nutasse sententiam, ut sit nobis ambigendum, utrum tua eruditio¹ turbata sit, 2 an vacillaverit per errorem. Nam interim deos credere, interim se deliberare variavit, ut propositionis incerto incertior responsionis nostrae intentio fundaretur. Sed in Natali meo versutiam nolo, non credo: procul est ab eius simplicitate subtilis urbanitas. Quid igitur? Ut qui rectam viam nescit, ubi, 3 ut fit, in plures una diffinditur, quia viam nescit, haeret anxius nec singulas audet eligere nec universas probare: sic, cui non est veri stabile iudicium, prout infida suspicio spargitur, ita eius dubia opinio dis- 4 sipatur. Nullum itaque miraculum est, si Caecilius identidem in contrariis ac repugnantibus iactetur,

¹ *Waltzing accepts Haupt's vafritia; but it is too ingenious, and too far removed from the codex.*

break the force of my pleading by interpolating this weighty subject for debate; it is for Octavius to deal with my several points, whole and undiluted as they stand, and to refute them if he can."

"Believe me," said I, "what you object to was only 2 meant as my contribution to the common stock, that in careful weighing of the scales our judgement might turn not upon frothy eloquence, but upon actual solid facts. But you shall have no reason to complain of further distraction; let us listen in complete silence to the reply our friend Januarius is burning to make."

XVI. Whereto Octavius: "I will answer to the 1 best of my ability, and I must rely on your assistance to turn the floodgates of truth upon the stains of blackening calumny.

"To begin with, I must honestly say that our good Natalis' views have been so wavering and erratic, so vague and slipshod, as to raise a doubt whether his learning has led to confusion, or his vacillations been due to misunderstanding. For he wavered, from belief 2 in the gods, at one moment, to keeping the question open at another, so that the ambiguity of statement might make my own line of reply more ambiguous. But to friend Natalis, I will not, and do not, impute trickery. Disingenuity is alien to his simplicity. Rather he is like a man who does not know the right 3 way, when the road happens to fork off in several directions; and not knowing the way, he doubts and hesitates, and dare not choose one in particular, or approve all alike; so, with a man who has not any firm grasp on truth, any untrustworthy suspicion flung out is enough to shatter his own fluctuating ideas. It is 4 no wonder that Caecilius finds himself tossed to and fro amid the waves and eddies of conflicting contra-

aestuet, fluctuetur. Quod ne fiat ulterius, convincam et redarguam quamvis diversa, quae dicta sunt, una veritate confirmata probataque: sic nec dubitandum ei de cetero est nec vagandum.

- 5 “Et quoniam meus frater erupit, aegre se ferre, stomachari, indignari, dolere, inlitteratos, pauperes, inperitos de rebus caelestibus disputare, sciat omnes homines, sine dilectu aetatis, sexus, dignitatis, rationis et sensus capaces et habiles procreatos nec fortuna nantos, sed natura insitos esse sapientiam: quin ipsos etiam philosophos, vel si qui alii artium repertoires in memorias exierunt, priusquam sollertia mentis parerent nominis claritatem, habitos esse plebeios, indoctos, seminudos: adeo divites facultatibus suis inligatos magis aurum suspicere consuesse quam caelum, nostrates pauperes et commentos esse prudentiam et tradidisse ceteris disciplinam. Unde apparet ingenium non dari facultatibus nec studio parari, sed cum ipsa mentis formatione generari.
- 6 Nihil itaque indignandum vel dolendum, si quicumque de divinis quaerat, sentiat, proferat, cum non disputantis auctoritas, sed disputationis ipsius veritas requiratur. Atque etiam, quo imperitior sermo, hoc inlustrior ratio est, quoniam non fucatur pompa facundiae et gratiae, sed, ut est, recti regula sustinetur.
- 1 XVII. “Nec recuso, quod Caecilius adserere inter praecipua conisus est, hominem nosse se et circumspicere debere, quid sit, unde sit, quare sit: utrum elementis concretus an concinnatus atomis, an potius

dictionis. To end the trouble I will refute and disprove his inconsistent arguments by proving and establishing a single truth; setting him free from all further occasion for doubt or wandering.

“When our good brother gives vent to feelings of 5 annoyance, vexation, indignation and regret that illiterate, poor and ignorant persons should discuss celestial things, he should remember that all men, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, were created with the capacity and power of reasoning and understanding; wisdom is not acquired by fortune, but implanted by nature; the philosophers themselves, the discoverers of arts whose names survive in memory, before their genius brought lustre on their names, were regarded as ignorant half-clad plebeians. Nay, the rich, engrossed in business calls, have their eyes on gold more often than on heaven; it is our poor folk who have pondered wisdom, and handed on its teachings. Brain-power assuredly is not gotten by bargaining, or won by study, but is part and parcel of the furniture of the mind. There is no call for 6 indignation or resentment at anyone whatsoever inquiring, holding, or propounding views concerning the divine, for it is not the authority of the disputant, but the truth of the disputation that is in request. Indeed, the more unskilled the utterance the clearer is the reasoning, for it relies not on tricks of eloquence or graces of style, but is sustained on its own merits by the rule of right.

XVII. “I take no exception to what Caecilius 1 advanced among his main contentions that man ought to know himself, to look round and see what, whence and why he is; whether he is composed of elements, or fashioned out of atoms, or rather made,

2 a deo factus, formatus, animatus. Quod ipsum explorare et eruere sine universitatis inquisitione non possumus, cum ita cohaerentia, conexa, concatenata sint, ut nisi divinitatis rationem diligenter excusseris, nescias humanitatis, nec possis pulchre gerere rem civilem, nisi cognoveris hanc communem omnium mundi civitatem, praecipue cum a feris beluis hoc differamus, quod illa sint prona in terramque vergentia nihil nata sint prospicere nisi pabulum, nos, quibus vultus erectus, quibus suspectus in caelum datus est, sermo et ratio, per quae deum adgnosimus, sentimus, imitamur, ignorare nec fas nec licet ingerentem sese oculis et sensibus nostris caelestem claritatem: sacrilegii enim vel maxime instar est, humi quaerere quod in sublimi debeas invenire.

3 "Quo magis mihi videntur qui hunc mundi totius ornatum non divina ratione perfectum volunt, sed frustis quibusdam temere cohaerentibus conglobatum, mentem, sensum, oculos denique ipsos non
4 habere. Quid enim potest esse tam apertum, tam confessum tamque perspicuum, cum oculos in caelum sustuleris et quae sunt infra circaque lustraveris, quam esse aliquod numen praestantissimae mentis, quo omnis natura inspiretur, moveatur, alatur, gubernetur?

5 "Caelum ipsum vide: quam late tenditur, quam rapide volvitur, vel quod in noctem astris distinguitur, vel quod in diem sole lustratur: iam scies, quam sit in eo summi moderatoris mira et divina libratio. Vide et annum, ut solis ambitus faciat, et mensem vide,
6 ut luna auctu, senio, labore circumagat. Quid

formed and soul-endowed by God. But this is the 2 very thing we cannot investigate and unravel without inquiry into the universe; things are so coherent, so closely combined and interconnected that, without careful investigation of the nature of deity, you cannot know that of man; just as you cannot manage civic affairs successfully without some knowledge of the wider world-society of men; all the more that our distinction from the beasts is this, that their downward earth-bound gaze is fixed only on their food: we, with countenance erect and heavenward gaze, endowed with speech and reason, enabling us to recognize, perceive and imitate God, neither may nor can ignore the heavenly sheen which thrusts itself upon our eyes and senses; for it is next door to sacrilege to seek upon the ground that which you ought to find on high.

"I cannot but feel that those who regard the design 3 of this great universe not as the product of the divine reason, but a conglomeration of odds and ends fortuitously brought together, have neither mind, nor sense, nor even eyes. What can be more 4 plain, more obvious, more patent as you lift your eyes to heaven, and survey all things beneath you and around, than that there exists some deity surpassing in wisdom, by whom all nature is inspired, moved, nourished, and directed?

"Look at heaven itself, its vast expanse, its rapid 5 revolutions, at night studded with stars, by day illumined by the sun; it brings home to you the balance wondrous and divine maintained by the supreme controller. Look at the year, made by the circling of the sun; at the month determined by the waxing, waning and action of the moon. Why 6

tenebrarum et luminis dicam recursantes vices, ut sit nobis operis et quietis alterna reparatio? Relinquenda vero astrologis prolixior de sideribus oratio, vel quod regant cursum navigandi, vel quod arandi metendique tempus inducant. Quae singula non modo ut crearentur, fierent, disponderentur, summi opificis et perfectae rationis eguerunt, verum etiam sentiri, perspicui, intellegi sine summa sollertia et ratione non possunt.

- 7 "Quid? cum ordo temporum ac frugum stabili varietate distinguitur, nonne auctorem suum parentemque testatur ver aequae cum suis floribus et aestas cum suis messibus et autumnus maturitas grata et hiberna olivitas necessaria? Qui ordo facile turbaretur, nisi maxima ratione consisteret. Iam providentiae quantae, ne hiems sola glacie ureret aut sola aestas ardore torreret, autumnus et veris inserere medium temperamentum, ut per vestigia sua anni revertentis occulti et innoxii transitus laberentur!
- 9 "Mari intende: lege litoris stringitur. Quicquid arborum est vide: quam e terrae visceribus animatur! Aspice oceanum: refluit reciprocis aestibus. Vide fontes: manant venis perennibus. Fluvios intueri: eunt semper exercitis lapsibus.
- 10 "Quid loquar apte disposita recta montium, collum flexa, porrecta camporum? quidve animantium loquar adversus sese tutelam multiforem? alias armatas cornibus, alias dentibus saeptas et fundatas ungulis et spicatas aculeis aut pedum celeritate liberas aut elatione pinnarum?
- 11 "Ipsa praecipue formae nostrae pulchritudo deum

speak of the recurrences of darkness and light, with their alternate provision for work and rest? I may leave to the astrologer a detailed description of the stars, their influence upon the course of mariners, their timing of the seasons for ploughing and for reaping. Not merely did their creation, production, and co-ordination require a supreme Artificer and perfected intelligence, but further they cannot be felt, perceived and understood without a supreme order of skilled reasoning. Look at the fixed and varying phases in the succession of the seasons and crops. Does not spring with its flowers attest its author and 7 parent, summer with its harvests, the mellow ripeness of autumn, and winter with its needed olive yield? How easily would confusion overtake the order, were it not held together by sovereign reason! See how, to break the spell of winter's blistering ice or 8 summer's parching heat, providence interposed the temperate mean of autumn and of spring, so that the year, returning on its traces, might glide forward on its imperceptible innocuous round.

"Mark well the sea, confined within its bounding 9 shore. Look at what tree you will, each drawing its life from the bowels of earth! Behold the ocean, ebbing and flowing with alternate tides. Watch the fountains, flowing from perennial veins. Gaze on the rivers, moving on with ever busy flow.

"Why tell of the ordered ridges of the mountains, 10 the winding of the hills, the stretches of the plains? Or of the intricate protective equipment of the animals; some armed with horns, some fenced with teeth, and shod with hoofs, or barbed with stings, or kept immune by swiftness of foot or soaring wing? Above all, beauty of form declares the handiwork of 11

fatetur artificem : status rigidus, vultus erectus, oculi in summo velut in specula constituti et omnes ceteri sensus velut in arce compositi.

- 1 XVIII. "Longum est ire per singula. Nihil in homine membrorum est, quod non et necessitatis causa sit et decoris, et quod magis mirum est, eadem figura omnibus, sed quaedam unicuique liniamenta deflexa : sic et similes universi videmur et inter se singuli dissimiles invenimur.
- 2 "Quid nascendi ratio ? quid ? cupido generandi nonne a deo data est, et ut ubera partu maturescente lactescant et ut tener fetus ubertate lactei roris adolescat ?
- 3 "Nec universitati solummodo deus, sed et partibus consulit. Britannia sole deficitur, sed circumfluentis maris tepore recreatur ; Aegypti siccitatem temperare Nilus amnis solet, Euphrates Mesopotamiam pro imbribus pensat, Indus flumen et serere orientem dicitur et rigare.
- 4 "Quod si ingressus aliquam domum omnia exulta, disposita, ornata vidisses, utique praeesse ei crederes dominum et illis bonis rebus multo esse meliorem : ita in hac mundi domo, cum caelo terraque perspicias providentiam, ordinem, legem, crede esse universitatis dominum parentemque ipsis sideribus et totius mundi partibus pulchriorem.
- 5 "Ni forte, quoniam de providentia nulla dubitatio est, inquirendum putas, utrum unius imperio an arbitrio plurimorum caeleste regnum gubernetur : quod ipsum non est multi laboris aperire cogitanti

God : our poise erect, our look upward, our eyes stationed in the watch-tower of the head, and the other senses all posted in the citadel.

XVIII. "It were a long task to enumerate particulars. There is not a detail in the human organism not made for use or ornament, and, more wonderful still, while all share the same figure, each individual shows personal deflections of type ; thus viewed in the mass we seem alike, yet have our individual peculiarities.

"Or consider the mechanism of birth, the instinct of reproduction. Is it not given of God that, as the embryo matures, the breasts should fill with milk, and the tender babe be nourished with the flow of milky dew ?

Nor is it for the whole only that God takes thought, but likewise for the parts. Britain, for instance, lacks sunshine, but gets warmth from the surrounding sea ; the river Nile tempers the drought of Egypt ; the Euphrates serves Mesopotamia in place of rain ; the river Indus is said both to sow and to water the east. Supposing you went into a house and found everything neat, orderly and well-kept, surely you would assume it had a master, and one much better than the good things, his belongings ; so in this house of the universe, when throughout heaven and earth you see the marks of foresight, order and law, may you not assume that the lord and author of the universe is fairer than the stars themselves or than any portions of the entire world ?

"But perhaps, while the existence of Providence admits no doubt, you think we should inquire whether a single sway or collective rule directs the heavenly realm. That question finds an easy answer

imperia terrena, quibus exempla utique de caelo.
 6 Quando umquam regni societas aut cum fide coepit
 aut sine cruore discessit? Omitto Persas de equorum
 hinnitu augurantes principatum, et Thebanorum
 par, mortuam fabulam, transeo. Ob pastorum et
 casae regnum de geminis memoria notissima est.
 Generi et soceri bella toto orbe diffusa sunt, et tam
 magni imperii duos fortuna non cepit.

7 "Vide cetera: rex unus apibus, dux unus in gregi-
 bus, in armentis rector unus. Tu in caelo summam
 potestatem dividi credas et scindi veri illius ac divini
 imperii totam maiestatem, cum palam sit parentem
 omnium deum nec principium habere nec terminum,
 qui nativitatem omnibus praestet, sibi perpetuitatem,
 qui ante mundum fuerit sibi ipse pro mundo: qui
 universa, quaecumque sunt, verbo iubet, ratione
 dispensat, virtute consummat.

8 "Hic non videri potest: visu clarior est; nec con-
 prehendi: *tactu purior est*; nec aestimari: sensibus
 maior est, infinitus, immensus et soli sibi tantus,
 quantus est, notus. Nobis vero ad intellectum
 pectus angustum est, et ideo sic eum digne aestima-
 9 mus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus. Eloquar quemad-

^a The story is from Herodotus, iii. 84. Darius was chosen monarch, as the satrap whose horse was the first to neigh.

^b Eteocles and Polynices ruled Thebes alternately. The quarrel that resulted brought about the War of the Seven against Thebes, and the death of the twin brothers in single combat.

^c The *Casa Romuli*, the thatched hut in which the twin brothers were supposed to have lived prior to the founding of the kingdom, was preserved as a cherished relic on the Palatine. [Prop. ii. 16. 20; iv. 1. 10.]

if you think of earthly dominions, which surely have analogies with heaven. When has joint monarchy 6 ever started in good faith, or ended without bloodshed? I need not refer to Persians, choosing their ruler by omen of a horse's^a neigh, nor to the dead and buried legend of the Theban brothers.^b Who does not know the story of the twins fighting for kingship over a few shepherds and a hut?^c Wars waged between son-in-law and father-in-law^a spread over the whole world, and the fortunes of a world empire could not find room for two.

"Look where you will: bees have but one king, 7 flocks one leader, cattle one monarch of the herd. Can you suppose that in heaven the supreme power is divided, that the prerogative of true and divine authority is sundered, when it is plain that God, the author of all, has neither beginning nor end; God, who brings all to birth, to himself gave perpetuity; who, before the world was, was to himself the world; who by his word calls into being all things that are, orders them by his wisdom, and perfects them by his goodness?

"God cannot be seen—he is too bright for sight; 8 nor grasped—he is too pure for touch; nor measured—for he is beyond all sense, infinite, measureless, his dimensions known to himself alone. Too narrow is our breast to take him in, therefore we can only measure him aright in calling him immeasurable. As 9

^a In 59 B.C. Pompeius married Julia, daughter of C. Julius Caesar. The epigram is from Lucan, *Phars.* i. 110:

populique potentis
 quae mare, quae terras, quae totum possidet orbem
 non cepit fortuna duos.

Just above he has referred to the "nulla fides regni sociis" of Lucan, i. 92.

modum sentio : magnitudinem dei qui se putat nosse, minuit ; qui non vult minuire, non novit.

10 "Nec nomen deo quaeras : deus nomen est. Illic vocabulis opus est, cum per singulos propriis appellationum insignibus multitudo dirimenda est : deo, qui solus est, dei vocabulum totum est. Quem si patrem dixerō, carnalem opineris ; si regem, terrenum suspiceris ; si dominum, intelleges utique mortalem. Aufer additamenta nominum et perspicies eius claritatem.

11 "Quid quod omnium de isto habeo consensum ? Audio vulgus : cum ad caelum manus tendunt, nihil aliud quam 'deum' dicunt et 'deus magnus est' et 'deus verus est' et 'si deus dederit.' Vulgi iste naturalis sermo est an Christiani confitentis oratio ? Et qui Iovem principem volunt, falluntur in nomine, sed de una potestate consentiunt.

1 XIX. "Audio poetas quoque unum patrem divum atque hominum praedicantes, et talem esse mortaliū mentem qualem parens omnium diem duxerit.

2 Quid ? Mantuanus Maro nonne apertius, proximius, verius 'principio' ait 'caelum ac terras' et cetera mundi membra 'spiritus intus alit et infusa mens agitat, inde hominum pecudumque genus' et quicquid aliud animalium ? Idem alio loco mentem istam et spiritum deum nominat. Haec enim verba sunt :

^a Homer, *Od.* xviii. 136.

^b The Virgilian lines referred to are combined from *Georg.* iv. 221, *Aen.* i. 743, and vi. 724-729.

I feel, so will I speak ; he who thinks he knows the greatness of God, makes it less ; he who would not lessen it, knows it not.

"Seek not a name for God : God is his name. Terms 10 are needed when individuals have to be distinguished from the mass, by proper marks and designations : for God, who alone is, the term 'God' sums all. Should I call him 'Father,' you would think of flesh ; or 'King,' you would reduce him to this world ; or 'Lord,' you will surely deem him mortal. Away with names and appanages, and you will see him in his splendour.

"Herein do I not command the assent of all ? List 11 to the common crowd : when they stretch forth their hands to heaven, they utter no other word but 'God,' or 'God is great,' or 'God is true,' or 'if God grant it.' Is that the natural language of the crowd, or the formulary of some confessing Christian ? Even those who would make Jupiter their potentate are mistaken in the name, but on holding to one only power agree.

XIX. "Poets, too, I hear proclaiming one 'Father 1 of Gods and men,' and saying 'Such is the mind of mortals, as the day which the Parent of all ushered in.'^a Again, does not the bard of Mantua^b say in 2 terms more plain, more pointed and more true, that 'in the beginning Heaven and earth' and the other portions of the universe, 'a spirit within nourishes, and a mind infused stirs them : thence springs the race of men and of the flocks,' and whatsoever living things there are ? And in another place he gives to mind and spirit the name of God. For these are his words :

deum namque ire per omnes
 terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum,
 unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes.

"Quid aliud et a nobis deus quam mens et ratio et spiritus praedicatur?"

3 "Recenseamus, si placet, disciplinam philosophorum: deprehendes eos, etsi sermonibus variis, ipsis tamen rebus in hanc unam coire et conspirare sententiam. Omitto illos rudes et veteres, qui de suis dictis sapientes esse meruerunt. Sit Thales Milesius omnium primus, qui primus omnium de caelestibus disputavit. Is autem Milesius Thales rerum initium aquam dixit, deum autem eam mentem quae ex aqua cuncta formaverit. Esto altior et sublimior aquae et spiritus ratio, quam ut ab homine potuerit inveniri, a deo traditum: vides philosophi principalis 5 nobiscum penitus opinionem consonare. Anaximenes deinceps et post Apolloniatas Diogenes aëra deum statuunt infinitum et immensum: horum quoque similis de divinitate consensio est. Anaxagorae vero descriptio et motus infinitae mentis deus dicitur, et Pythagorae deus est animus per universam rerum naturam commensans et intentus, ex quo etiam animalium omnium vita carpatur. Xenophanem notum est omne infinitum cum mente deum tradere, et Antisthenem populares deos multos, sed naturalem unum praecipuum, Speusippum vim animalem, qua 8 omnia regantur, deum nosse. Quid? Democritus, quamvis atomorum primus inventor, nonne plerumque naturam quae imagines fundat et intelligentiam

^a Thales of Miletus (636-546 B.C.) was first of the Ionian physicists. The summary of philosophic theories is abstracted from Cicero, *N.D.* i. 10-15, and moves on beaten ground.

^b This reads like an appended gloss.

For God the whole inspires,
 Earth, and the tracts of sea, and heaven profound
 Whence comes man's race, herds, rain and fire.

"What else do we too proclaim God to be but mind, reason and spirit?"

"Next, let us, if you will, review the teaching of 3 philosophers; you will find them, though in differing phraseology, yet in substance all agreeing, and in harmony upon this one point. I may omit the 4 primitives whose dicta earned them the title of 'the wise men.' Let us begin with Thales of Miletus,^a the earliest, and first of all to discuss celestial things. This Thales of Miletus said that water was the first principle, and that God was the mind which formed all things out of water. [Here you have a theory of water and spirit too deep and sublime to have been invented by a man: it was handed down by God.]^b The opinion of the pioneer philosopher you see is in full accord with ours. Next, 5 Anaximenes, and after him Diogenes of Apollonia, posit air as God, infinite and measureless; showing a similar agreement on the nature of the Deity. Anaxagoras regards God as the sphere and movement of an infinite intelligence; the God of Pythagoras is mind pervading and extending through the universe of nature, from which also the life of all things living is derived. Xenophanes, as is 7 well known, held God to be the infinite and intelligent All; Antisthenes that for the people there were many gods, but in nature one presiding over all; and Speusippus recognized God in the vital force that governs all. Once more Democritus, albeit 8 the originator of atoms, speaks constantly of nature, the source of mental images, and of intelligence,

- deum loquitur? Straton quoque et ipse naturam Etiam Epicurus ille, qui deos aut otiosos fingit aut nullos, naturam superponit. Aristoteles variat et adsignat tamen unam potestatem: nam interim mentem, mundum interim deum dicit, interim mundo deum praeficit. Theophrastus etiam variat, alias mundo, alias menti divinae tribuens principatum. Heraclides Ponticus quoque mundo divinam mentem
- 10 quamvis varie adscribit. Zenon et Chrysippus et Cleanthes sunt et ipsi multiformes, sed ad unitatem providentiae omnes revolvuntur. Cleanthes enim mentem modo *naturae atque*¹ animum, modo aethera, plerumque rationem deum disserit. Zenon, eiusdem magister, naturalem legem atque divinam et aethera interim interdumque rationem vult omnium esse principium; idem interpretando Iunonem aëra, Iovem caelum, Neptunum mare, ignem esse Vulcanum et ceteros similiter vulgi deos elementa esse monstrando publicum arguit graviter et revincit errorem.
- 11 Eadem fere Chrysippus: vim divinam rationalem, naturam et mundum, interim et fatalem necessitatem deum credit Zenonemque interpretatione physiologica in Hesiodi, Homeri Orpheique carminibus imitatur.
- 12 Babylonio etiam Diogeni disciplina est exponendi et disserendi Iovis partum et ortum Minervae et hoc genus cetera rerum vocabula esse, non deorum.
- 13 Nam Socraticus Xenophon formam dei veri negat videri posse et ideo quaeri non oportere, Ariston Stoicus comprehendit omnino non posse: uterque maiestatem dei intellegendi desperatione senserunt.

¹ The inserted words are restored from Cicero, De Nat. Deor. i. 37.

as God. So Straton, too, of nature. Even Epicurus, whose gods are either unconcerned or non-existent, sets Nature over them. Aristotle, in varying terms, assigns a single power; one while speaking of mind, at another of the universe as God; and at another setting God above the universe. Theophrastus similarly varies, assigning the primacy now to the universe, now to a divine intelligence. Heraclides of Pontus, though in varying terms, ascribes to the universe divine intelligence. Zeno, 10 Chrysippus and Cleanthes in expositions multiform all revolve around a central Providence. Cleanthes discourses of the mind and soul of nature, or again of aether, or more often of reason, as God. Zeno, his master, will have natural law, which is also divine, occasionally the aether, and sometimes reason, as the first principle of all things; by interpreting Juno as air, Jupiter as heaven, Neptune as the sea, Vulcan as fire, and by showing that the rest of the gods of popular belief are similarly elements, he vigorously assails and refutes the vulgar error. Chrysippus says much the same: he believes in 11 divine force, the rational nature of the universe, or sometimes fate and necessity, as God; and he follows Zeno in his naturalistic interpretation of Hesiod, Homer and Orpheus in their poems. Diogenes 12 of Babylon again adopts a similar school of teaching in expounding the birth of Jupiter, the production of Minerva and the like, as terms denoting things, not gods. Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates, 13 says that the true God's form cannot be seen, and therefore should not be inquired into; Aristo the Stoic, that it is beyond all comprehension: both realizing that the majesty of God is the despair of

14 Platonī aptior de deo et rebus ipsis et nominibus oratio est et quae tota esset caelestis, nisi persuasionis civilis nonnunquam admixtione sordesceret. Platonī itaque in *Timaeo* deus est ipso suo nomine mundi parens, artifex animae, caelestium terrenorumque fabricator, quem et invenire difficile prae nimia et incredibili potestate, et cum inveneris, in publicum dicere impossibile praefatur.

15 “Eadem fere et ista, quae nostra sunt: nam et deum novimus et parentem omnium dicimus at numquam publice nisi interrogati praedicamus.

1 XX. “Exposui opiniones omnium ferme philosophorum, quibus inlustrior gloria est, deum unum multis licet designasse nominibus, ut quivis arbitretur, aut nunc Christianos philosophos esse aut philosophos fuisse iam tunc Christianos.

2 “Quod si providentia mundus regitur et unius dei nutu gubernatur, non nos debet antiquitas inperitorum fabellis suis delectata vel capta ad errorem mutui rapere consensus, cum philosophorum suorum sententis refellatur, quibus et rationis et vetustatis

3 adstitit auctoritas. Maioribus enim nostris tam facilis in mendaciis fides fuit, ut temere crediderint etiam alia monstrosa, mera miracula: Scyllam multiplicem, Chimaeram multiformem et Hydram felicibus vulneribus renascentem et Centauros equos suis hominibus inplexos, et quicquid famae licet

4 fingere, illis erat libenter audire. Quid illas aniles

understanding. Plato deals more frankly with 14 God, and actual things and names; his discourse would be quite divine, were it not sometimes sullied by the intrusion of political bias. For Plato, in the *Timaeus*, God is by virtue of his name the author of the universe, the artificer of soul, the constructor of all things in heaven and earth; hard to discover, as he declares, by reason of his incredible and extraordinary power, and, when discovered, impossible to describe in popular terms.

“The position is pretty much the same as our own; 15 we too recognize God, and call him the parent of all; yet avoid popular expositions except when questioned.

XX. “I have now cited the opinions of almost 1 all philosophers of any marked distinction, all designating God as one, though under great variety of names, so that one might suppose, either that Christians of to-day are philosophers, or that philosophers of old were already Christians.

“But if the universe is ruled by Providence, and 2 directed by the will of a single God, we must not allow an ignorant tradition, charmed or captivated by its pet fables, to hurry us into the mistake of agreement; they are refuted by the opinions of their own philosophers, supported by the authority of reason and of antiquity. Our ancestors were so 3 ready to believe in fictions, that they accepted on trust all kind of wild and monstrous marvels and miracles: Scylla with serpent coils, a hybrid Chimaera, a Hydra replenishing its life from vivifying wounds, Centaurs half-horse half-man, or any other fiction of folk-lore fell upon willing ears. Why recall old wives’ tales of human beings changed 4

fabulas, de hominibus aves et feras et de hominibus arbores atque flores? Quae si essent facta, fierent :
 5 quia fieri non possunt, ideo nec facta sunt. Similiter *erraverunt* erga deos quoque maiores nostri : inprovidi, creduli rudi simplicitate crediderunt. Dum reges suos colunt religiose, dum defunctos eos desiderant in imaginibus videre, dum gestiunt eorum memorias in statu is detinere, sacra facta sunt quae
 6 fuerant adsumpta solacia. Denique et antequam commerciis orbis pateret et antequam gentes ritus suos moresque miscerent, unaquaeque natio conditorem suum aut ducem inclytum aut reginam pudicam sexu suo fortiorem aut alicuius muneris vel artis repertorem venerabatur ut civem bonae memoriae : sic et defunctis praemium et futuris dabatur exemplum.

1 XXI. "Lege historicorum scripta vel scripta sapientium : eadem mecum recognosces.

"Ob merita virtutis aut muneris deos habitos Euhemerus exsequitur, et eorum natales, patrias, sepulcra dinumerat et per provincias monstrat, Dictaei Iovis et Apollinis Delphici et Phariae Isidis et Cereris Eleusinae. Prodicus adsumptos in deos loquitur, qui errando inventis novis frugibus utilitati hominum profuerunt. In eandem sententiam et Persaeus philosophatur et adnectit inventas fruges et frugum ipsarum reperi-
 2 tores isdem nominibus, ut comicus sermo est 'Venerem sine Libero et Cerere frigere.' Alexander ille Magnus Macedo insigni volumine ad matrem suam

^a Materials and argument are drawn chiefly from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. and ii.

^b The derivation of gods from distinguished men was specially associated with the *Sacred Register* (τὰ ἁγρὰ φη) of Euhemerus, of the period of Alexander the Great.

into birds and beasts, or into trees and flowers? Had such things happened in the past, they would happen now; as they cannot happen now, they did not happen then. So with our ancestors' attitude to the gods : blind and credulous they yielded simple-minded credence. Devoutly reverencing their kings, while, after death, desiring to see their likenesses portrayed, eager to perpetuate their memories in statues, they formed objects of worship from things designed for consolation. Before the world was opened up by commerce, and nations adopted each others' rites and customs, each individual group revered its founder, or some famous chief, or virtuous queen strong beyond her sex, or the inventor of some social boon or art, as a citizen worthy of remembrance. It was at once a tribute to the dead and an example to posterity.

XXI. "Read history, or the writings of the learned,"^a 1 and you will recognize the truth of what I say.

"Euhemerus^b gives a list of gods accepted for their merits or their services; enumerates their birthdays, fatherlands, and places of sepulture, and province by province localizes Dictaeon Jupiter, Delphic Apollo, Pharian Isis, and Eleusinian Ceres. Prodicus tells of the apotheosis of men who by 2 travel and the discovery of new fruits conferred blessings upon men. To the like effect Persaeus philosophizes in the same sense, and associates the fruits discovered with discoverers of the fruits bearing the same names, as in the comic line : 'Venus, without Liber and Ceres, is a-cold.'^c Alexander 3 the Great of Macedon in a striking letter to his

^c The quotation, from Terence, *Eun.* iv. v. 6, is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 60.

- scripsit, metu suae potestatis proditum sibi de diis hominibus a sacerdote secretum: illic Vulcanum facit omnium principem, et postea Iovis gentem.
- 4 Saturnum enim, principem huius generis et examinis, omnes scriptores vetustatis Graeci Romanique hominem tradiderunt. Scit hoc Nepos et Cassius in
- 5 historia, et Thallus ac Diodorus hoc loquuntur. Is itaque Saturnus Creta profugus Italiam metu filii saevientis accesserat, et Iani susceptus hospitio rudes illos homines et agrestes multa docuit ut Graeculus et politus, litteras imprimere, nummos signare, in-
- 6 strumenta conficere. Itaque latebram suam, quod tuto latuisset, vocari maluit Latium, et urbem Saturniam indito de suo nomine et Ianiculum Ianus ad memoriam uterque posteritatis reliquerunt.
- 7 Homo igitur utique qui fugit, homo utique qui latuit, et pater hominis et natus ex homine: Terrae enim vel Caeli filius, quod apud Italos esset ignotis parentibus, proditus, ut in hodiernum inopinato visos caelo missos, ignobiles et ignotos terrae filios nominamus.
- 8 Eius filius Iuppiter Cretae excluso parente regnavit, illic obiit, illic filios habuit: adhuc antrum Iovis visitur et sepulcrum eius ostenditur, et ipsis sacris suis humanitatis arguitur.
- 9 "Otiosum estire persingulos et totam seriem generis istius explicare, cum in primis parentibus probata mortalitas in ceteros ipso ordine successionis influxerit. Nisi forte post mortem deos fingitis, et perierante

^a The authors and the stories referred to are from Tert. *Apol.*

10. Corn. Nepos was a historian contemporary with Cicero; L. Cassius Hemina, an annalist of the second century B.C., wrote a history of Rome to the end of the Punic Wars; Thallus, a historian of the Augustan Age; Diodorus Siculus, in the age of Augustus, compiled world records coming down to the opening of Caesar's Gallic Wars.

mother wrote that he had frightened a priest into betraying to him the secret about deified men; in it he puts Vulcan at the head of the line, and after him the family of Jupiter. Saturn, the fountain-head of this family and clan, all antiquarians, Greek and Roman, treat as a man. So Nepos, and Cassius in his history, and Thallus and Diodorus^a say the same. Saturn they tell us was a fugitive from 5 Crete, who in terror of his son's violence came to Italy and there received hospitality from Janus; there, as you might expect of a soft and polished Greek, he taught the untutored rustics many arts—the use of letters, coinage, and making of implements. For 6 his hiding-place, where he had found safe hiding, he chose the name of Latium; the Saturnian city, called by his own name, and Ianiculum from Janus, have handed down their memory to posterity. Assuredly a mere refugee, and one who lay in hiding, 7 was a man; father of a man, and son of a man; reputed to be son of Earth or Heaven, merely because his parents were unknown to the Italians; just as to this day we speak of unexpected visitants as 'Heaven-sent,' and obscure nonentities as 'sons of Earth.' His son Jupiter, after his father's 8 expulsion, reigned in Crete; there died; there had sons; visits are still paid to the cave of Jupiter, and his grave is shown; and the actual rites observed prove his humanity.

"It is waste of time to go through all one by one, 9 and to trace the whole family line; the mortality which we have proved in the case of their first parents has descended to the rest by order of succession. But perhaps you imagine that men become gods after death; Romulus was made a god by the false

- Proculo deus Romulus, et Iuba Mauris volentibus deus est, et divi ceteri reges, qui consecrantur non ad fidem numinis, sed ad honorem emeritae
- 10 potestatis. Invitis his denique hoc nomen adscribitur: optant in homine perseverare, fieri se deos metuunt, etsi iam senes nolunt.
- 11 "Ergo nec de mortuis dii, quoniam deus mori non potest, nec de natis, quoniam moritur omne quod nascitur: divinum autem id est, quod nec ortum habet nec occasum. Cur enim, si nati sunt, non hodieque nascuntur? Nisi forte iam Iuppiter senuit et partus in Iunone defecit et Minerva canuit antequam peperit. An ideo cessavit ista generatio, quoniam nulla huiusmodi fabulis praebetur adsensio?
- 12 "Ceterum si dii creare possent, interire non possent, plures totis hominibus deos haberemus, ut iam eos nec caelum contineret nec aër caperet nec terra gestaret. Unde manifestum est homines illos fuisse, quos et natos legimus et mortuos scimus.
- 1 XXII. "Quis ergo dubitat horum imagines consecratas vulgus orare et publice colere, dum opinio et mens imperitorum artis concinnitate decipitur, auri fulgore praestringitur, argenti nitore et candore
- 2 eboris hebetatur? Quodsi in animum quis inducat, tormentis quibus et quibus machinis simulacrum omne formetur, erubescet timere se materiem ab
- 3 artifice, ut deum faceret, inlusam. Deus enim

^a J. Proculus was a Roman senator, who affirmed that R. had appeared to him in a dream and intimated his desire to be worshipped as the God Quirinus (Livy, i. 16).

^b When the Spaniards wished to erect a temple to him, the Emperor Tiberius said in the Senate: "I call you to witness, Conscript Fathers, that I am a mortal" (Tac. *Ann.*

oath of Proculus ^a; Juba a god by the vote of the Mauritanians; and so the other kings deified by consecration due not so much to belief in their divinity, as to recognition of greatness and desert. In point of 10 fact they dislike the attribution of the name: they desire to remain men; they are afraid of becoming gods ^b; old though they be, they would rather not.

"The dead cannot become gods, for a god cannot 11 die; neither can those of mortal birth, for everything that is born dies; that which is divine, has neither rising nor setting. If gods are born, why pray are no gods born to-day? Can it be perhaps that Jupiter has become aged, and Juno past child-bearing, and Minerva grey before becoming a mother? Or is it that reproduction has come to an end, because belief in fables of that kind is no longer forthcoming?

"Besides, if gods could procreate and could not die, 12 we should have more gods than all mankind together, and by now there would be no room for them in heaven, no place in the air, no standing ground on earth. And this proves that those gods were men, of whose births we read, and whose deaths we know.

XXII. "Who can doubt that it is to their consecrated 1 images that the common folk offer prayer and public worship, while the fancy and judgement of the uncritical is at the mercy of artistic finish, dazzled by the glitter of gold, lulled to rest by the sheen of silver, and the whiteness of ivory? But if anyone 2 calls to mind the cranks and the machines that go to the shaping of an image, he would blush at the idea of fearing raw matter, which the play of the craftsman's fancy has transformed into a god. A god of 3

iv. 38). Suetonius (*Vesp.* 23) ascribes to the Emperor Vespasian the dying jest, "Vae, puto, Deus fio."

ligneus, rogi fortasse vel infelicis stipitis portio,
 4 suspenditur, caeditur, dolatur, runcinatur; et deus
 aereus vel argenteus de immundo vasculo, ut sae-
 pius factum Aegyptio regi, conflatur, tunditur malleis
 et incudibus figuratur; et lapideus *deus* caeditur,
 scalpitur et ab impurato homine levigatur, nec sentit
 suae nativitatis iniuriam, ita ut nec postea de vestra
 veneratione culturam.

5 "Nisi forte nondum deus saxum est vel lignum
 vel argentum. Quando igitur hic nascitur? Ecce
 funditur, fabricatur, sculpsitur: nondum deus est;
 ecce plumbatur, construitur, erigitur: nec adhuc
 deus est; ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur: tunc
 postremo deus est, cum homo illum voluit et dedicavit.

6 "Quanto verius de diis vestris animalia muta natu-
 raliter iudicant! Mures, hirundines, milvi non
 sentire eos sciunt: rodunt, inculcant, insident, ac
 nisi abigatis, in ipso dei vestri ore nidificant; araneae
 vero faciem eius intexunt et de ipso capite sua fila
 7 suspendunt. Vos tergetis, mundatis, eraditis et illos,
 quos facitis, protegitis et timetis, dum unusquisque
 vestrum non cogitat prius se debere deum nosse
 quam colere, dum inconsulte gestiunt parentibus
 oboedire, dum fieri malunt alieni erroris accessio
 quam sibi credere, dum nihil ex his quae timent
 norunt. Sic in auro et argento avaritia consecrata

^a Amasis, of Egypt, constructed a statue of a god out of
 a gold foot-bath used by himself and his courtiers (Herod.
 ii. 172).

^b From Tert. *Apol.* 12. The halo of a saint was originally
 a round disc put on the head of a statue to prevent defilement
 378

wood, a fragment perhaps of a funeral pile or a
 gallows-tree, is hung up, sawn, chiselled and planed;
 your god of bronze or silver, made as it often was 4
 from some dirty vessel for an Egyptian king,^a is
 melted down, hammered with mallets, and shaped on
 anvils; your god of stone is hewn, carved and polished
 by some lewd fellow, and is no more aware of the
 stains upon his birth than he is afterwards of the
 homage of your worship.

"Say you the stone, or wood, or silver is not as yet a 5
 god? When then does he come to the birth? See
 him cast, moulded, sculptured—not yet is he a god;
 see him soldered, assembled, and set up—still not a
 god; see him bedizened, consecrated, worshipped;
 hey presto! he is a god—by a man's will and act of
 dedication.

"How much truer the judgement which the dumb 6
 animals pass instinctively upon those gods of yours!
 Mice, swallows, kites know that they have no feeling;
 they gnaw them, perch and settle on them,^b and
 (unless you scare them) build in your god's own
 mouth; spiders spin webs across his face, and hang
 their threads from his head. You wipe, and clean, 7
 and scrape, you at once protect and fear the images
 which you construct; you all of you forget that a
 man ought to know his god before he worships him;
 you vie in thoughtless obedience to your parents; you
 prefer becoming parties to the errors of others,
 rather than trusting yourselves; and of the things
 you fear, you know nothing. Such is the way in
 which avarice is consecrated in gold and silver, the
 by birds. So the statue of Priapus says (Hor. *Sat.* i. 8.
 37):

mentior at si quid, merdis caput inguiner albis
 corvorum atque in me veniat mictum atque cacatum . . .

est, sic statuarum inanium consignata forma, sic nata Romana superstitio.

- 8 "Quorum ritus si percenseas, ridenda quam multa, quam multa etiam miseranda sunt! Nudi cruda hieme discurrunt, alii incedunt pilleati, scuta vetera circumferunt, pelles caedunt, mendicantes vicatim deos ducunt: quaedam fana semel anno adire permittunt, quaedam in totum nefas visere: est quo viro non licet et nonnulla absque feminis sacra sunt, etiam servo quibusdam caerimoniis interesse piaculare flagitium est: alia sacra coronat univira, alia multivira, et magna religione conquiritur quae plura possit
9 adulteria numerare. Quid? qui sanguine suo libat et vulneribus suis supplicat, non profanus melius esset quam sic religiosus? aut cui testa sunt obscena demessa, quo modo deum violat qui hoc modo placat, cum si eunuchos deus vellet, posset procreare, non facere?
- 10 "Quis non intellegat male sanos et vanae et perditae mentis in ista desipere et ipsam errantium turbam mutua sibi patrocinia praestare? Hic defensio communis furoris est furentium multitudo.

1. XXIII. "Considera denique sacra ipsa et ipsa mysteria: invenies exitus tristes, fata et funera et luctus atque planctus miserorum deorum. Isis

^a The votaries of Lycean Pan at the Lupercalia frolics, held on February 15.

^b The Salii, priests of Mars, carried round the sacred shields (*ancilia*) in solemn procession at the March festival.

^c The Galli priests of Cybele went their begging rounds, with an image of the Magna Mater. On her worship at Rome see Dill, *Roman Society from Nero*, pp. 547-559.

^d The rites of the Bona Dea, Ceres and Vesta were restricted to women; those of Hercules to men.

^e So at the June 11 Festival of Mater Matuta, who was confused with Leucothea, goddess of Dawn.

form and pattern of empty images prescribed, and Roman superstition brought into being.

"Examine into their attendant rites, how ridiculous, 8 how pitiable even they appear! Men running about naked in mid-winter^a; others marching about in felt caps, or parading old shields^b; drumming on skins, and dragging their gods to beg from street to street.^c Some temples may only be entered once a year, some never visited at all. There are rites which a man may not attend,^d others which may be held only in the absence of women; others where the mere presence of a slave is an outrage needing expiation.^e For some rites the wreath is laid by a woman with one husband, for others by a woman with several, or ceremonial hue and cry is made for one still more promiscuous in her attachments. Or take the man 9 who pours libations of his own blood, and from his own wounds draws supplication^f—would he not be better without religion than religious in this fashion? and propitiatory self-mutilation—is it not an insult to God? if God wanted eunuchs, could he not produce, not make them?

"These, anyone can see, are the aberrations, follies 10 and excesses of a disordered mind, and the mere number of those who go wrong supplies mutual securities. General insanity shields itself behind the multitude of the insane.

XXIII. "And lastly, consider the sacred rites of 1 the mysteries: you will find tragic deaths, dooms, funerals, mourning and lamentations of woebegone

^f Chapter 30 refers to the blood-rites of Bellona. Still more savage were the rites of self-gashing practised by the Galli priests of Cybele at the Attis festivals. Cf. Tert. *Apol.* 23.

perditum filium cum Cynocephalo suo et calvis sacerdotibus luget, plangit, inquit, et Isiaci miseri caedunt pectora et dolorem infelicissimae matris imitantur; mox invento parvulo gaudet Isis, exultant sacerdotes, Cynocephalus inventor gloriatur, nec desinunt annis omnibus vel perdere quod inveniunt vel invenire quod perdunt. Nonne ridiculum est vel lugere quod colas vel colere quod lugeas? Haec tamen Aegyptia quondam nunc et sacra Romana sunt, ut desipias Isidis ad hirundinem et sistrum et adsparsis membris inanem tui Serapidis sive Osiridis tumultum.

- 2 "Ceres facibus accensis et serpente circumdata errore subreptam et corruptam Liberam anxio sollicita
3 vestigat: haec sunt Eleusinia. Et quae Iovis sacra sunt? Nutrix capella est, et avido patri subtrahitur infans, ne voretur, et Corybantum cymbalis, ne pater
4 audiat vagitus, tinnitus eliditur. Cybelae Dindyma pudet dicere, quae adulterum suum infeliciter placitum, quoniam et ipsa deformis et vetula, ut multorum deorum mater, ad stuprum illicere non

^a This clause, possibly a gloss, has been transposed in the ms. The cult of Isis, introduced after the Third Punic War, was officially recognized in 43 B.C. Isis was sister and wife of Osiris, who here seems confused with the infant Horus. Cynocephalus is the jackal-headed Anubis, who accompanied Isis in her quest for the remains of the murdered and dismembered Osiris. According to one version of the legend Isis, transformed to a twittering swallow, flew round and round the pillar that marked the grave of Osiris. Ostia was the first cradle and headquarters of the Italian worship of Isis: but at Rome Domitian built a temple to Isis, and also to Serapis; and Commodus participated in person in the Isis rites, wearing the linen vestment of votaries, with shaven head and carrying the effigy of Anubis. Dill, *Roman Soc.* pp. 560-584, gives a full description of the cult and ritual.

gods. Isis, with her Cynocephalus and shaven priests, mourning, bewailing and searching for her lost son; her miserable votaries beating their breasts and mimicking the sorrows of the unhappy mother; then, when the stripling is found, Isis rejoices, her priests jump for joy, the Cynocephalus glories in his discovery; and, year by year, they cease not to lose what they find or to find what they lose. Is it not absurd either to mourn your object of worship, or to worship your object of mourning? Yet these old Egyptian rites have now found their way to Rome, so that you may play the fool to the swallow and sistrum of Isis, the scattered limbs, and the empty tomb of your Serapis or Osiris.^a

"Ceres, with lighted torches, serpent-girt, with 2 anxious troubled footsteps follows the trail of her decoyed and ravished Libera^b—such are the Eleusinian mysteries. And what are the rites of Jupiter? His 3 nurse is a she-goat; the infant is withdrawn from his greedy sire, for fear he should be eaten; the tinkling cymbals of the Corybantes are clashed for fear the father should hear his infant wails.^c Of Cybele and 4 Dindyma^d it is a shame to speak: unable to satisfy the affections of her luckless paramour—for mothering of many gods had made her plain and old—she re-

^b The myth of Persephone, daughter of Eleusinian Demeter (Ceres), was transferred to the primitive Libera of Italian worship.

^c According to the Cretan legend Jupiter, when rescued from his father Saturn, was suckled by the goat Amalthea. He was hidden away in a cave that his father might not hear his infant cries, and to drown them his votaries, the Curetes (here confused with the Corybantes, priests of Cybele), danced and clashed their cymbals.

^d Dindyma is the cluster of hills, near Pessinus, where Attis, her Phrygian votary, underwent self-mutilation.

poterat, exsecuit ut deum scilicet faceret eunuchum. Propter hanc fabulam Galli eam et semiviri sui corporis supplicio colunt. Haec iam non sunt sacra, tormenta sunt.

5 "Quid? formae ipsae et habitus nonne arguunt ludibria et dedecora deorum vestrorum? Vulcanus claudus deus et debilis, Apollo tot aetatibus levis, Aesculapius bene barbatus, etsi semper adulescentis Apollinis filius, Neptunus glaucis oculis, Minerva caesiis, bubulis luno, pedibus Mercurius alatis, Pan ungulatis, Saturnus compeditis. Ianus vero frontes duas gestat, quasi et aversus incedat; Diana interim est alte succincta venatrix, et Ephesia mammis multis et uberibus extructa, et Trivia trinis capitibus et multis
6 manibus horrida. Quid? ipse Iuppiter vester modo inerbis statuitur, modo barbatus locatur; et cum Hammon dicitur, habet cornua, et cum Capitolinus, tunc gerit fulmina, et cum Latiaris, cruore perfunditur, et cum Feretrius corona induitur. Et ne longius multos Ioves obeam, tot sunt Iovis mon-
7 stra quot nomina. Erigone suspensa de laqueo est, ut Virgo inter astra ignita sit, Castores alternis moriuntur ut vivant, Aesculapius ut in deum surgat fulminatur, Hercules ut hominem exuat Oetaeis ignibus concrematur.

1 XXIV. "Has fabulas et errores et ab inperitis parentibus discimus, et quod est gravius, ipsis studiis

^a Saturn was represented with shackled feet, according to the myth that he was so fettered by his son Jupiter.

^b The Egyptian or Libyan ram-god Hammon was identified with Jupiter.

^c See on chapter 30 note.

^d *Spolia Opima*, the arms of a hostile leader slain by the Roman commander in person, were dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius; but the reading here is conjectural.

duced the god to impotence, and in deference to this fable her Galli priests inflict the same disablement upon their bodies. Such practices are not sacred rites, but tortures.

"Again, form and feature bring contempt and 5 mockery upon your gods. Vulcan is lame and crippled; Apollo after years and years still beardless; Aesculapius full bearded, though the son of ever young Apollo. Neptune has sea-green eyes, Minerva grey, like a cat's, Juno those of an ox; Mercurius has winged feet, Pan hoofs, Saturn feet shackled.^a Janus has two faces, ready to walk backwards; Diana is sometimes short-kilted for the hunt, while at Ephesus she is figured with many breasts and paps, and as Trivia is a dreadful being with three heads and many hands. Your own Jupiter himself sometimes stands 6 beardless, at others portrayed with a beard; under the name of Hammon,^b he has horns; Jupiter of the Capitol wields thunderbolts; Jupiter Latiaris is drenched with gore^c; as Feretrius he wears a wreath.^d But, not to linger over Jupiters, his phases are as many as his names. Erigone^e hanged her- 7 self, to shine as Virgo among the stars; Castor and his twin live, by alternate deaths; Aesculapius, to rise to godhead, is struck by lightning; Hercules puts off mortality by being consumed in the flames of Oeta.

XXIV. "Such are the fables and fooleries we learn 1 at our parents' knees, and—worse still—improve

^e Erigone, daughter of Icarius, with the help of his faithful dog Maera, found her murdered father's grave, and in grief hanged herself upon the tree that grew over the tomb. She was translated to the sky as Virgo, Icarius became Bootes, and Maera the dog-star Procyon.

- et disciplinis elaboramus, carminibus praecipue poetarum, qui plurimum quantum veritati ipsi sua auctoritate nocuerunt. Et Plato ideo praeclare Homerum illum inclytum laudatum et coronatum de civitate, quam in sermone instituebat, eiecit.
- 3 Hic enim praecipuus bello Troico deos vestros, etsi ludos facit, tamen in hominum rebus et actibus miscuit, hic eorum paria composuit, sauciavit Venerem, 4 Martem vinxit, vulneravit, fugavit. Iovem narrat Briareo liberatum, ne a diis ceteris ligaretur, et Sarpedonem filium, quoniam morti non poterat eripere, cruentis imbribus flere, et loro Veneris inlectum flagrantius, quam in adulteras soleat, cum 5 Iunone uxore concumbere. Alibi Hercules stercora egerit et Apollo Admeto pecus pascit. Laomedonti vero muros Neptunus instituit, nec mercedem operis 6 infelix structor accepit. Illic Iovis fulmen cum Aeneae armis in incude fabricatur, cum caelum et fulmina et fulgura longe ante fuerint, quam Iuppiter in Creta nasceretur, et flammas veri fulminis nec Cyclops potuerit imitari nec ipse Iuppiter non vereri.
- 7 Quid loquar Martis et Veneris adulterium deprehensum et in Ganymeden Iovis stuprum caelo consecratum? Quae omnia in hoc prodita, ut vitiis hominum quaedam auctoritas pararetur.
- 8 "His atque huiusmodi figmentis et mendaciis dulcioribus corrumpuntur ingenia puerorum et isdem fabulis inhaerentibus adusque summae aetatis robur adollescunt et in isdem opinionibus miseri consenscunt, cum sit veritas obvia, sed requirentibus.

^a The *Iliad* references (i. 399 vv., v. 330, 385, xiv. 313 vv., xvi. 459) reproduce Tert. *Apol.* 14, which also contains references to Admetus, Laomedon and Aesculapius.

upon by our own studies and training, especially in the works of poets, who have had such fatal influence in injuring the cause of truth. Plato did quite right 2 in excluding Homer, however crowned with praise and honour, from his ideal Republic. For he above 3 all others in his *Iliad*, though half in jest, gave gods a place in the affairs and doings of men; he matched them as combatants; drew blood from Venus; chained up Mars, wounded him and put him to flight.^a He tells us how Briareus set Jupiter free to save him 4 from being bound by the rest of the gods; and how, when he could not rescue his son Sarpedon from death, he wept showers of blood; and that under the spell of Venus's girdle he mated with Juno his wife with more than usual ardour. In another poet 5 Hercules clears out the cow dung, and Apollo tends the flocks for Admetus. Neptune built walls for Laomedon, and the luckless builder got no pay for his job. In another poet Jupiter's thunderbolt is 6 forged on the anvil along with the arms of Aeneas, though heaven and thunderbolts and lightning existed long before Jupiter was born in Crete, and no Cyclops could have imitated the flames of genuine thunderbolts nor Jupiter have failed to fear them. Why should I mention Mars and Venus caught in 7 adultery, or Jupiter's passion for Ganymedes, hallowed in Heaven? Such stories are but precedents and sanctions for men's vices.

"Choice figments and falsehoods of this kind corrupt 8 the minds of boys; they grow up to full manhood with these fables sticking in their memory, and unhappily grow old in the same beliefs, though the truth is before their eyes if only they would look for it.

- 1 XXV. "At tamen ista ipsa superstitio Romanis
dedit, auxit, fundavit imperium, cum non tam virtute
quam religione et pietate pollerent. Nimirum
insignis et nobilis iustitia Romana ab ipsis imperii
2 nascentis incunabulis auspicata est! Nonne in ortu
suo et scelere collecti et muniti immanitatis suae
terrore creverunt? Nam asylo prima plebs con-
gregata est: confluerant perdit, facinerosi, incesti,
sicarii, proditores, et ut ipse Romulus imperator et
rector populum suum facinore praecelleret, parricidium fecit. Haec prima sunt auspicia religiosae
3 civitatis! Mox alienas virgines iam desponsatas,
iam destinatas et nonnullas de matrimonio mulier-
culas sine more rapuit, violavit, inlusit, et cum earum
parentibus, id est cum soceris suis bellum miscuit,
propinquum sanguinem fudit. Quid inreligiosius,
quid audacius, quid ipsa sceleris confidentia tutius?
4 Iam finitimos agro pellere, civitates proximas evertere
cum templis et altaribus, captos cogere, damnis alienis
et suis sceleribus adolescere cum Romulo regibus
ceteris et posteris ducibus disciplina communis est.
5 "Ita quicquid Romani tenent, colunt, possident,
audaciae praeda est: templa omnia de manubiis,
id est de ruinis urbium, de spoliis deorum, de caedibus
sacerdotum.
6 "Hoc insultare et inludere est victis religionibus
servire, captivas eas post victorias adorare. Nam
adorare quae manu ceperis, sacrilegium est conse-

XXV. "All the same, you say, this so-called super- 1
stition gave world-empire to the Romans, increased
and established it, for their strength lay not so much
in valour as in religion and piety. Say you the noble
and majestic fabric of Roman justice drew its auspices
from the cradle of infant empire! Yet were they 2
not in origin a collection of criminals? did they
not grow by the iron terror of their own savagery?
The *plebs* first congregated in a city of refuge;
thither had flocked ruffians, criminals, profligates,
assassins and traitors; and Romulus himself, to
secure criminal pre-eminence in office and rule,
murdered his own brother. Such were the initial
auspices of our religious commonwealth! Next, 3
without leave or law, he carried off other men's
maidens, some betrothed, some promised, some al-
ready married wives, outraged and mocked them,
and then went to war with their parents, that is with
their own fathers-in-law, and shed kinsmen's blood.
Was there ever procedure more irreligious, more
outrageous, more cynical in its avowal of crime?
Thenceforward it becomes the practice of all suc- 4
ceeding kings and leaders to dispossess neighbours
of their territory, to overthrow adjoining states with
their temples and their altars, to drive them into
captivity, to wax fat on losses inflicted, and crimes
committed.

"All that the Romans hold, occupy and possess is 5
the spoil of outrage; their temples are all of loot,
drawn from the ruin of cities, the plunder of gods
and the slaughter of priests.

"It is an insult and a mockery to serve vanquished 6
religions, first to enslave and then worship the
vanquished. To adore what you have seized by

crare, non numina. Totiens ergo Romanis inpiatum est quotiens triumphatum, tot de diis spolia quot de 7 gentibus et tropaea. Igitur Romani non ideo tanti, quod religiosi, sed quod inpune sacrilegi: neque enim potuerunt in ipsis bellis deos adiutores habere, adversus quos arma rapuerunt. At, quos prostraverant, detriumphatos colere coeperunt: quid autem isti dii pro Romanis possunt, qui nihil pro suis adversus eorum arma valuerunt?

8 "Romanorum enim vernaculos deos novimus: Romulus, Picus, Tiberinus et Consus et Pilumnus ac Volumnus dii; Cloacinam Tatius et invenit et coluit, Pavorem Hostilius atque Pallorem; mox a nescio quo Febris dedicata: haec alumna urbis istius superstitio, morbi et malae valetudines! Sane et Acca Larentia et Flora, meretrices propudiosae, inter morbos Romanorum et deos computandae.

9 "Isti scilicet adversus ceteros, qui in gentibus colebantur, Romanorum imperium protulerunt: neque enim eos adversum suos homines vel Mars Thracius vel Iuppiter Creticus vel Iuno nunc Argiva, nunc Samia, nunc Poena, vel Diana Taurica vel Mater Idaea vel Aegyptia illa non numina, sed portenta iuverunt.

10 "Nisi forte apud istos maior castitas virginum aut religio sanctior sacerdotum, cum paene in pluribus

^a Romulus, the reputed founder of Rome, was deified as Quirinus; Picus, son of Saturn, a mythical king of Italy, was an agricultural divinity, associated with augury through his sacred bird, the woodpecker; Tiberinus was the deified river Tiber; Consus was associated with the storage of grain; Pilumnus, another rural deity, was patron of millers and bakers; Volumnus brought luck to young children. Acca Larentia, by one account the nurse of Romulus, by

force is to hallow sacrilege, not deities. Each Roman triumph has meant a new impiety, and all trophies over nations new spoliations of the gods. The 7 Romans then have grown great not by religion, but by unpunished sacrilege; for in their actual wars they could not have had the assistance of the gods against whom they took up arms. A triumph over trampled gods is the preliminary to their worship; yet what can such gods do for Romans, when they could not help their own votaries against the arms of Rome?

"The indigenous gods of the Romans we know"; 8 Romulus, Picus, Tiberinus, and Consus and Pilumnus and Volumnus; Tatius invented and worshipped Cloacina; Hostilius Pavor (*Panic*) and Pallor; some one or another canonized Febris (*Fever*); such, in superstition, is the foster-child of your city of diseases and maladies. Presumably Acca Larentia too and Flora, prostitutes lost to shame, may be numbered among the diseases—and the gods—of Rome.

"Such forsooth were the powers who carried for- 9 ward the banners of Rome against the gods worshipped by other nations. For Thracian Mars, or Cretan Jupiter, or Juno Argive, Samian and Carthaginian^b by turns, Tauric Diana, or the Idaean Mother, or the Egyptian monsters rather than deities never took sides for you against their own people.

"But perhaps your virgins were more chaste, or 10 your priests more religious. Nay, but in more of the

others played on the affections of the wealthy, and left her gains to the people of Rome. Flora, Queen of Flowers, was the goddess of fertility in all living things.

^b The Carthaginian goddess *Tanit*, worshipped under the name *Caelestis*, was regarded as the analogue of Juno.

virginibus, ut quae inconsultius se viris miscuissent, Vesta sane nesciente, sit incestum vindicatum, in residuis inopunitatem fecerit non castitas tutior, sed
 11 inopudicitia felicior. Ubi autem magis quam a sacerdotibus inter aras et delubra conducuntur stupra, tractantur lenocinia, adulteria meditantur? Frequentius denique in aedituorum cellulis quam in ipsis lupanaribus flagrans libido defungitur.

12 "Et tamen ante eos deo dispensante diu regna tenuerunt Assyrii, Medi, Persae, Graeci etiam et Aegyptii, cum Pontifices et Arvales et Salios et Vestales et Augures non haberent nec pullos cavea reclusos, quorum cibo vel fastidio res publica summa regeretur.

1 XXVI. "Iam enim venio ad illa auspicia et auguria Romana, quae summo labore collecta testatus es et
 2 paenitenter omissa et observata feliciter. Clodius scilicet et Flaminius et Iunius ideo exercitus perdid-
 3 erunt, quod pullorum solistimum tripudium ex-
 4 spectandum non putaverunt. Quid? Regulus nonne auguria servavit et captus est? Mancinus religionem tenuit, et sub iugum missus est et deditus. Pullos edaces habuit et Paulus, apud Cannas tamen cum
 4 maiore reipublicae parte prostratus est. Gaius Caesar, ne ante brumam in Africam navigia trans-
 mitteret, auguriis et auspiciis renitentibus, sprexit: eo facilius et navigavit et vicit.

^a See ch. 7 and notes.

^b M. Atilius Regulus, the typical patriot, who suffered defeat in the First Punic War, 255 B.C., and surrendered himself into the hands of the Carthaginians to meet his fate.

^c C. Hostilius Mancinus, consul 137 B.C., was defeated before Numantia; the Senate refused to ratify the terms to which he had agreed, and he was handed over to the enemy.

^d 216 B.C.

virgins than not, who committed indiscretions with men, no doubt without the knowledge of Vesta, immorality was brought home; and among the rest impunity resulted not from stricter chastity, so much as more fortunate indulgence. And where are more 11 lewd bargains made, assignations arranged, and adulteries planned, than by priests among the altars and sanctuaries? Lust gratifies its flames in the chambers of the sacristans more often than in the houses of ill-fame.

"And after all, under God's dispensation, before 12 Romans existed, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Greeks too and Egyptians ruled great empires, although they had no Pontiffs, no Arval Brothers, no Salii Vestals or Augurs, no cooped chickens to rule the destinies of state by their appetite or distaste for food.

XXVI. "I come next to the auspices and auguries 1 which you have laboriously collected and cited, to prove retribution attending on neglect, and success upon observance. Clodius, you say, Flaminius, and 2 Junius lost their armies because they refused to wait till the chickens ate heartily.^a But what of Regulus ^b? 3 Did he not observe the auguries? yet was he not taken captive? Mancinus did nothing irreligious, yet he passed under the yoke, and was surrendered to the enemy.^c Paulus's chickens were in good feed, yet at Cannae ^d he and the greater part of the republic were laid low. When auguries and auspices were 4 adverse to his crossing into Africa before winter, Gaius Caesar disregarded them ^e: as the result both voyage and victory were made easy.

^e In 47 B.C. C. Julius Caesar crossed from Sicily to Africa, to prosecute the war against the Pompeians.

5 "Quae vero et quanta de oraculis prosequar? Post mortem Amphiarus ventura respondit, qui proditum iri se ob monile ab uxore nescivit. Tiresias caecus 6 futura videbat, qui praesentia non videbat. De Pyrrho Ennius Apollinis Pythi responsa confinxit, cum iam Apollo versus facere desisset: cuius tunc cautum illud et ambiguum defecit oraculum, cum et politiores homines et minus creduli esse coeperunt. Et Demosthenes, quod sciret responsa simulata, *φιλιππίζειν* Pythiam querebatur.

7 "At nonnumquam tamen veritatem vel auspicia vel oracula tetigerunt. Quamquam inter multa mendacia videri possit industriam casus imitatus, adgrediar tamen fontem ipsum erroris et pravitatis, unde omnis caligo ista manavit, et altius eruere et aperire manifestius.

8 "Spiritus sunt insinceri, vagi, a caelesti vigore terrenis labibus et cupiditatibus degravati. Isti igitur spiritus, posteaquam simplicitatem substantiae suae onusti et immersi vitiis perdiderunt, ad solacium calamitatis suae non desinunt perditam iam perdere et depravati errorem pravitatis infundere et alienati a 9 deo inductis pravis religionibus a deo segregare. Eos spiritus daemones esse poetae sciunt, philosophi disserunt, Socrates novit, qui ad nutum et arbitrium adsidentis sibi daemonis vel declinabat negotia vel 10 petebat. Magi quoque non tantum sciunt daemones

^a Amphiarus, foreseeing his own doom if he joined the "Seven against Thebes," concealed himself. Tempted by the bribe of a necklace, his wife Eriphyle betrayed his hiding-place to Polynices, the claimant to the Theban throne.

^b The Theban soothsayer, who divined the tragic vicissitudes of Oedipus.

^c The ambiguous oracle ran "Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos

"What, or rather how much, shall I dwell on 5 oracles? Amphiarus after death gave responses about the future, though he did not know that, for a necklace, he would be betrayed by his wife.^a The blind Tiresias ^b saw into the future, though he could not see things present. Ennius put together 6 the responses of the Pythian Apollo ^c about Pyrrhus, though Apollo had already ceased to compose in verse; and his wary and ambiguous oracle failed as men began to be both more educated and less credulous. Demosthenes, knowing that responses were fabricated, complained of the Pythian priestess for 'Philippizing.'

"Yet, on occasion, even auspices or oracles have hit 7 the truth. Though, among hosts of falsehoods, chance may sometimes have worn the semblance of design, yet I will try to get to the true source of error and perversity, which lies behind the thick darkness, expose its roots, and let in the light of day.

"There exist unclean and wandering spirits, whose 8 heavenly vigour has been overlaid by earthly soils and lusts. These spirits, burdened and steeped in vices, have lost the simplicity of their original substance; as some consolation for their own calamity, these lost spirits cease not to conspire for others' loss, to deprave them with their own depravity, and under the alienation of depraved and heathen superstitions to separate them from God. Such spirits are recognized 9 as 'demons' by the poets, are discussed by philosophers, and were known to Socrates who, at the instigation and will of his attendant demon, declined or pursued certain courses of action. The Magi 10 vincere posse," quoted by Cic. *De Div.* ii. 56. 116, who also refers to the dictum of Demosthenes.

sed etiam quicquid miraculi ludunt, per daemones faciunt: illis adspirantibus et infundentibus praestigias edunt, vel quae non sunt videri, vel quae sunt
 11 non videri. Eorum magorum et eloquio et negotio primus Hostanes et verum deum merita maiestate prosequitur et angelos, id est ministros et nuntios, dei sedem tueri eiusque venerationi novit adistere, ut et nutu ipso et vultu domini terrii contremescant. Idem etiam daemones prodidit terrenos, vagos,
 12 humanitatis inimicos. Quid? Plato, qui invenire deum negotium credidit, nonne et angelos sine negotio narrat et daemones? et in *Symposio* etiam suo naturam daemonum exprimere conitur? Vult enim esse substantiam inter mortalem inmortalemque, id est inter corpus et spiritum mediam, terreni ponderis et caelestis levitatis admixtione concretam, ex qua monet etiam nos amorem informari et in labi pectoribus humanis et sensum movere et adfectus fingere et ardorem cupiditatis infundere.

1 XXVII. "Isti igitur impuri spiritus, daemones, ut ostensum magis ac philosophis, sub statu et imaginibus consecratis delitescunt et adflatu suo auctoritatem quasi praesentis numinis consequuntur, dum inspirant interim vatibus, dum fanis immorantur, dum nonnumquam extorum fibras animant, avium volatus gubernant, sortes regunt, oracula efficiunt, falsis
 2 pluribus involuta. Nam et falluntur et fallunt, ut et nescientes sinceram veritatem et quam sciunt, in perditionem sui non confitentes. Sic a caelo deorsum

^a Hostanes, said to have been the first to write on medical magic, accompanied Xerxes in his 480 B.C. expedition against Greece.

not only know of the demons, but by their aid perform their magical tricks; by their suggestion and connivance they produce their feats of conjuring, making things visible that *are not*, or things that *are* invisible. Hostanes,^a whose eloquence and 11 faculty give him first place among the Magi, renders due homage to the true God; angels, he tells us—ministers and messengers of God—attend the throne of God, and stand by to render worship, trembling and affrighted at the nod and countenance of their Lord. He has borne witness also to demons of the earth, ranging to and fro, the enemies of mankind. Does not Plato too, who accounted it a hard matter 12 to find out God, find it no hard matter to tell of angels and of demons? in his *Symposium* is he not at pains to define their nature? He will have it that there is a substance intermediate between mortal and immortal, that is, between body and spirit, compounded of an admixture of earthly weight and heavenly lightness; out of which he tells us Love is fashioned, and glides into the hearts of men, and stirs their senses, and shapes affections, and instils the ardour of desire.

XXVII. "These unclean spirits, or demons, as revealed to Magi and philosophers, find a lurking place under statues and consecrated images, and by their breath exercise influence as of a present God: at one while they inspire prophets, at another haunt temples, at another animate the fibres of entrails, govern the flight of birds, determine lots, and are the authors of oracles mostly wrapped in falsehood. Deceived as well as deceivers, they 2 know not essential truth, and what they know they confess not to their own undoing. Thus they drag

gravant et a deo vero ad materias avocant, vitam turbant, somnos inquietant, inrepentes etiam corporibus occulte, ut spiritus tenues, morbos fingunt, terrent mentes, membra distorquent, ut ad cultum sui cogant, ut nidore altarium vel hostiis pecudum saginati, remissis quae constrinxerant, curasse videantur.

3 tur. Hinc sunt et furentes, quos in publicum videtis excurrere, vates et ipsi absque templo, sic insaniunt, sic bacchantur, sic rotantur : par et in illis instigatio

4 daemonis, sed argumentum dispar furoris. De ipsis etiam illa, quae paulo ante tibi dicta sunt, ut Iuppiter ludos repeteret ex somnio, ut cum equis Castores viderentur, ut cingulum matronae navicula sequeretur.

5 "Haec omnia sciunt pleraque pars vestrum ipsos daemonas de semetipsis confiteri, quotiens a nobis tormentis verborum et orationis incendiis de cor-

6 poribus exiguntur. Ipse Saturnus et Serapis et Iuppiter et quicquid daemonum colitis, victi dolore quod sunt eloquuntur, nec utique in turpitudinem sui, nonnullis praesertim vestrum adsistentibus, men-

7 tiuntur. Ipsis testibus, esse eos daemonas, de se verum confitentibus credite : adiurati enim per deum verum et solum, inviti, miseri corporibus inhorrescunt et vel exiliunt statim vel evanescent gradatim, prout fides patientis adiuvat aut gratia curantis adspirat. Sic Christianos de proximo fugitant, quos longe in

men downwards from Heaven, call them away from the true God to material things, perturb their life, disquiet their slumbers, creep into their bodies covertly, as impalpable spirits, produce diseases, strike terror into minds, distort the limbs, thus driving men to do them worship, in order that, when glutted with the reek of altars or with victim beasts, they may loosen the tightened bonds and claim to have effected a cure. From them too come the maniacs 3 whom you see running into the street, soothsayers without a temple, raving, possessed, and whirling round. There is the same demoniac possession, though the guise of frenzy is different. To them 4 too we may trace delusions already mentioned, Jupiter by a dream claiming the renewal of his games ; Castor and Pollux being seen with their horses ; and the bark towed by a matron's girdle."

"All this, as most of your people know, the demons 5 themselves admit to be true, when they are driven out of men's bodies by words of exorcism and the fire of prayer. Saturn himself, Serapis, Jupiter, or 6 any other demon you worship, under stress of pain, confess openly what they are ; and surely they would not lie to their own disgrace, particularly with some of you standing by. When the witnesses 7 themselves confess the truth about themselves, that they are demons, you cannot but believe ; when adjured in the name of the one true God, reluctantly, in misery, they quail and quake, and either suddenly leap forth at once, or vanish gradually, according to the faith exercised by the sufferer or the grace imparted by the healer. Challenged at close quarters they run away from Christians, though at a distance in mixed crowds they set you on to

* See ch. 7 notes.

8 coetibus per vos lacessebant. Ideo inserti mentibus imperitorum odium nostri serunt occulte per timorem: naturale est enim et odisse quem timeas, et quem metueris infestare, si possis. Sic occupant animos et obstruunt pectora, ut ante nos incipiant homines odisse quam nosse, ne cognitos aut imitari possint aut damnare non possint.

1 XXVIII. "Quam autem iniquum sit, incognitis et
inexploratis iudicare, quod facitis, nobis ipsis paeni-
2 tentibus credite. Et nos enim idem fuimus et eadem
vobiscum quondam adhuc caeci et hebetes sentie-
bamus, quasi Christiani monstra colerent, infantes
vorarent, convivia incesta miscerent, nec intellege-
bamus ab his fabulas istas semper ventilari et num-
quam vel investigari vel probari, nec tanto tempore
aliquem existere, qui proderet, non tantum facti
veniam, verum etiam indicii gratiam consecuturum:
malum autem adeo non esse, ut Christianus reus nec
erubesceret nec timeret, et unum solummodo, quod
3 non ante fuerit, paeniteret. Nos tamen cum sacri-
legos aliquos et incestos, parricidas etiam defen-
dendos et tuendos suscipiebamus, hos nec audiendos
in totum putabamus, ut torqueremus confitentes
ad negandum, videlicet ne perirent, exercentes in
his perversam quaestionem, non quae verum erueret,
4 sed quae mendacium cogeret. Et si qui infirmior
malo pressus et victus Christianum se negasset,
400

harry them. Worming their way into the minds of 8
the ignorant, they sow secret hate against us based
on fear; for it is natural to hate one you fear, and to
launch what attacks you can upon one of whom you
are afraid. They seize and close the approaches
of men's hearts, to insure their hating us before
they know us, for fear that when they know us they
may either proceed to imitate or feel unable to
condemn.

XXVIII. "How unfair it is to pass judgement, as 1
you do, without knowledge and investigation, a guilty
conscience reminds us. We too were once in the 2
same case as you, blindly and stupidly sharing your
ideas, and supposing that the Christians worshipped
monsters, devoured infants, and joined in incestuous
feasts; we did not understand that the demons were
for ever setting fables afloat without either investiga-
tion or proof; and that all the while no one came
forward with evidence, though he would have gained
not only pardon for wrong done but also reward for his
disclosure; and that, so far from any wrong-doing
of any kind, accused Christians neither blushed nor
feared, but regretted one thing only, that they had
not been Christians before. At the time when we 3
used to undertake the defence and protection of
cases of sacrilege or incest or even murders, we re-
garded Christians as not even entitled to a hearing;
sometimes under pretence of pity, with savage cruelty
we tortured those who confessed, to make them deny,
in order to save their lives; in their case we reversed
the usual practice, employing torture not to elicit
truth, but to compel falsehood. And if anyone, 4
overcome by the pressure of pain, succumbed and
denied his faith, we extended indulgence to him, as

- favebamus ei, quasi eierato nomine iam omnia facta
 5 sua illa negatione purgaret. Adgnoscitisne eadem
 nos sensisse et egisse, quae sentitis et geritis? cum,
 si ratio, non instigatio daemonis iudicaret, essent
 urgendi magis, non ut differerentur se Christianos,
 sed ut de incestis stupris, de inpiatis sacris, de in-
 6 fantibus immolatis faterentur. His enim et huiusmodi
 fabulis idem daemones ad execrationis horrorem
 imperitorum aures adversus nos refererunt. Nec
 tamen mirum, cum omnium fama, quae semper in-
 sparsis mendaciis alitur, ostensa veritate consumitur,
 sit et negotium daemonum; ab ipsis enim rumor
 falsus et seritur et fovetur.
- 7 "Inde est quod audire te dicis, caput asini rem no-
 bis esse divinam. Quis tam stultus, ut hoc colat?
 Quis stultior, ut hoc coli credat? Nisi quod vos et
 totos asinos in stabulis cum vestra vel sua Epona
 consecratis et eosdem asinos cum Iside religiose
 decoratis, item boum capita et capita vervecum et
 immolatis et colitis, de capro etiam et homine mixtos
 8 deos et leonum et canum vultu deos dedicatis. Nonne
 et Apin bovem cum Aegyptiis adoratis et pascitis?
 Nec eorum sacra damnatis instituta serpentibus,
 crocodillis, beluis ceteris et avibus et piscibus,
 quorum aliquem deum si quis occiderit, etiam capite
 9 punitur. Idem Aegyptii cum plerisque vobis non
 magis Isidem quam ceparum acrimonias metuunt,
 nec Serapidem magis quam strepitus per pudenda
 corporis expressos contremescunt.
- 10 "Etiam ille, qui de adoratis sacerdotis virilibus ad-
 versum nos fabulatur, temptat in nos conferre quae

^a Epona, patron goddess of horses, asses and mules.

though forswearing the name was in itself enough to
 purge him of all his misdoings. Do you recognize 5
 that what we felt and did was exactly what you feel
 and are doing now? Whereas, if the decision rested
 with reason, and not the instigation of a demon, they
 should rather be pressed not to disavow their Chris-
 tianity, but to confess to incest and fornication, to
 unholy rites, and to child-sacrifice. For these are the 6
 kind of tales with which these demons have stuffed
 the ears of the ignorant to excite horror and execra-
 tion against us. Nor need we be surprised; seeing
 that scandal, which always feeds on the dissemina-
 tion of falsehoods, and withers in the light of truth,
 is the handiwork of demons; for false rumour is
 their seed-plot and their nursery.

"Hence the gossip which you say you hear about our 7
 treating the head of an ass as divine. Who would be
 foolish enough to worship that? Who more foolish
 still, to believe in such worship? except perhaps
 those of you who keep whole asses in your stalls
 consecrated to your or their Epona,^a and decorate
 them ceremonially in company with Isis, or who
 sacrifice and worship heads of oxen and of wethers,
 and dedicate gods half-goat, half-man, and lion-
 headed or dog-headed deities. Do not you join the 8
 Egyptians in adoring and feeding the bull Apis?
 and approve rites instituted in honour of serpents
 and crocodiles and all the other beasts and birds and
 fishes, gods whose slaughter is made punishable by
 death? And yet these same Egyptians, like most of 9
 you, stand in no more awe of Isis than of a pungent
 leek, or of Serapis than of a breaking of wind.

"The man who fakes up stories of our adoring the 10
 privates of a priest is only trying to foist his own

- sua sunt. Ista enim impudicitiae eorum forsitan sacra sint, apud quos sexus omnis membris omnibus prostat, apud quos tota impudicitia vocatur urbanitas, qui scortorum licentiae invident, qui medios viros lambunt, libidinoso ore inguinibus inhaerescunt, homines malae linguae etiam si tacerent, quos prius
 11 taedescit impudicitiae suae quam pudescit. Pro nefas ! id in se mali facinoris admittunt, quod nec aetas potest pati mollior nec cogi servitus durior.
- 1 XXIX. "Haec et huiusmodi propudia nobis non licet nec audire, etiam pluribus turpe defendere est : ea enim de castis fingitis et pudicis, quae fieri non crederemus, nisi de vobis probaretis.
- 2 "Nam quod religioni nostrae hominem noxium et crucem eius adscribitis, longe de vicinia veritatis erratis, qui putatis deum credi aut meruisse noxium
 3 aut potuisse terrenum. Ne ille miserabilis, cuius in homine mortali spes omnis innititur : totum enim
 4 eius auxilium cum extincto homine finitur ! Aegyptii sane hominem sibi quem colant eligunt : illum unum propitiant, illum de omnibus consulunt, illi victimas caedunt. At ille, qui ceteris deus, sibi certe homo est, velit nolit : nec enim conscientiam suam decipit
 5 si fallit alienam. Etiam principibus et regibus, non ut magnis et electis viris, sicut fas est, sed ut deis turpiter adulatio falsa blanditur, cum et praeclaro viro honor verius et optimo amor dulcius praebetur. Sic eorum numen vocant, ad imagines supplicant, Genium, id est daemonem, implorant, et est eis tutius per Iouis Genium peierare quam regis.

abominations upon us. Indecencies of that kind may be countenanced, where modesty in any kind of sexual relation or exposure is unknown. But 11
 faugh ! . . . their obscenities are more revolting than modern refinement can stomach, or servitude endure.

XXIX. "Such filth and beastliness are an offence to 1
 our ears ; for most the mere mention of them, even in self-defence, is a disgrace ; to modest and clean-living folk you impute acts which we should regard as impossible, did you not prove them by your own practices.

"As for the worship of a malefactor and his cross, 2
 which you ascribe to our religion, you go very far wide of the truth, in supposing that a criminal deserved or that a mortal man had the right to be believed in as God. Pitiabie indeed the man whose 3
 hope is stayed upon a mortal man, with whose death all that he builds on comes to an end ! True indeed 4
 that Egyptians choose a man for their worship ; that they propitiate him and him alone ; that they consult him on all matters and kill victims in his honour. But though to others he is a god, to himself at least he is a man, whether he like it or no ; for he does not impose upon his own consciousness, even if he deludes others. Princes and kings may rightly be hailed as 5
 great and elect among men, but homage to them as gods is base and lying flattery ; honour is the truer tribute to distinction, affection the more acceptable reward to worth. Yet that is the way men invoke their deity, make supplications to their images, pray to their Geniuses, that is their daemon ; and think it safer to swear falsely by the genius of Jupiter than by that of their king.

6 “Cruces etiam nec colimus nec optamus. Vos
plane, qui ligneos deos consecratis, cruces ligneas
7 ut deorum vestrorum partes forsitan adoratis. Nam
et signa ipsa et cantabra et vexilla castrorum quid
aliud quam inauratae cruces sunt et ornatae? Tro-
paea vestra victricia non tantum simplicis crucis
8 faciem, verum et adfixi hominis imitantur. Signum
sane crucis naturaliter visimus in navi, cum velis
tumentibus vehitur, cum expansis palmulis labitur:
et cum erigitur iugum, crucis signum est, et cum
homo porrectis manibus deum pura mente veneratur.
Ita signo crucis aut ratio naturalis innitur aut vestra
religio formatur.

1 XXX. “Illum iam velim convenire, qui initiari nos
dicit aut credit de caede infantis et sanguine. Putas
posse fieri, ut tam molle, tam parvulum corpus
fata vulnerum capiat? ut quisquam illum rudem
sanguinem novelli et vixdum hominis caedat, fundat,
exhauriat? Nemo hoc potest credere nisi qui possit
2 audere. Vos enim video procreatos filios nunc feris
et avibus exponere, nunc adstrangulatos misero
mortis genere elidere: sunt quae in ipsis visceribus
medicaminibus epotis originem futuri hominis ex-
tinguant et parricidium faciant, antequam pariant.
3 “Et haec utique de deorum vestrorum disciplina
descendunt: nam Saturnus filios suos non exposuit,
sed voravit. Merito ei in nonnullis Africae partibus
a parentibus infantes immolabantur, blanditiis et
osculo comprimente vagitum, ne flebilis hostia im-

^a This unqualified repudiation of reverence for the Cross goes further than Tert. *Apol.* 16 which also dwells on these fanciful analogies. But the Cross finds little place in Christian symbolism prior to Constantine. The Cross discerned in the mast and spread oars of a ship seems far-fetched, but may be introduced as a touch of local colour.

“Crosses again we neither worship nor set our hopes 6
on.” You, who consecrate gods of wood, very possibly
adore wooden crosses as being portions of your gods.
For what are your standards, and banners, and en- 7
signs but gilded and decorated crosses? Your
trophies of victory show not only the figure of a
simple cross, but also of one crucified. Quite true we 8
see the sign of the cross naturally figured in a ship
riding the swelling waves, or impelled by outspread
oars; a cross-beam set up forms the sign of the
cross; and so too does a man with outstretched hands
devoutly offering worship to God. In this way the
system of nature leans on the sign of the cross or
your religion is shaped thereby.

XXX. “I should now like to join issue with the man 1
who says or believes that we are initiated by the
slaughter and blood of an infant. Can you think it
possible that its tender, tiny body should be gashed
by fatal wounds? that any man alive would sacrifice,
and spill, and drain the innocent blood of a babe yet
hardly born? None can believe it, but one capable
of the crime. Among you I do see newly-born sons 2
at times exposed to wild beasts and birds, or violently
strangled to a painful death; and there are women
who, by medicinal draughts, extinguish in the womb
and commit infanticide upon the offspring yet un-
born. Such practices of course follow the precedents 3
set by your gods^b; Saturnus did not indeed expose
his sons, but devoured them. Not without reason in
some parts of Africa infants were sacrificed to him by
their parents, and their cries smothered by endear-
ments and kisses for fear of a victim being sacrificed

^b These allegations appear with fuller rhetorical detail in Tert. *Apol.* 9.

- 4 molaretur. Tauris etiam Ponticis et Aegyptio Busiridi ritus fuit hospites immolare, et Mercurio Gallis humanas vel inhumanas victimas caedere, Romani Graecum et Graecam, Gallum et Gallam sacrificii viventes obruere, hodieque ab ipsis Latiaris Iuppiter homicidio colitur, et quod Saturni filio dignum est, mali et noxii hominis sanguine saginatur.
- 5 Ipsum credo docuisse sanguinis foedere coniurare Catilinam, et Bellonam sacrum suum haustu humani cruoris imbuerere, et comitalem morbum hominis
- 6 sanguine, id est morbo graviore sanare. Non dissimiles et qui de harena feras devorant inlitas et infectas cruore vel membris hominis et viscere saginatas. Nobis homicidium nec videre fas nec audire, tantumque ab humano sanguine cavemus, ut nec edulium pecorum in cibis sanguinem noverimus.
- 1 XXXI. "Et de incesto convivio fabulam grandem adversum nos daemonum coitio mentita est, ut gloriam pudicitiae deformis infamiae aspersione macularet, ut ante exploratam veritatem homines a
- 2 nobis terrore infandae opinionis averteret. Sic de isto et tuus Fronto non ut adfirmator testimonium fecit, sed convicium ut orator adpersit: haec enim
- 3 potius de vestris gentibus nata sunt. Ius est apud Persas misceri cum matribus, Aegyptiis et Athenis

^a Lact. i. 21 refers to the sacrifice of a criminal at the *feriae Latinae*, festival of Jupiter of Latium.

^b According to Sallust and Florus he pledged the conspirators with potations of human blood, but Dio Cassius charges him with slaughter of a human victim.

^c Tert. *Apol.* 9. Commodus expressly incited the votaries of Bellona to gash their arms for blood of sprinkling; but this contamination of the rites of the Cappadocian Bellona with those of the primitive Sabellian goddess belongs to Imperial times.

in tears. Among the Pontic Tauri and for the Egyptian Busiris, the custom was to immolate strangers; for the Gauls, to slay human—or rather inhuman—victims to Mercurius. The Romans, by way of sacrifice, buried alive a Greek man and woman, and a Gaulish man and woman; even to-day a human victim is offered to Jupiter Latiaris,^a and, as becomes the son of Saturn, he batters on the blood of a criminal offender. It was he, I believe, who instructed Catiline^b to cement conspiracy with a covenant of blood, and Bellona^c to imbrue her sacrifice with draughts of human blood; and to heal the falling sickness with a man's blood, a cure worse than the disease.^d They^e are on a par with those who eat of wild beasts from the arena, fresh glutted with blood and gorged with the limbs and entrails of men.^f For us it is not permissible either to see or to hear of human slaughter; we have such a shrinking from human blood that at our meals we avoid the blood of animals used for food.

XXXI. "The tall story of incestuous banqueting is 1 a lying concoction of demons leagued against us to throw the mud of infamous aspersions upon our boasted purity, that before looking into the truth popular opinion might be turned against us by shocking and horrible imputations. In this way 2 your own Fronto^g did not produce evidence as on affidavit, but spattered abuse like an agitator. The truth is such practices originated with your own people. Among the Persians the law approves 3 unions with mothers; in Egypt and at Athens

^d Celsus and Pliny both refer to draughts of human blood prescribed as a cure for epilepsy.

^e Tert. *Apol.* 9 enlarges on these horrors.

^f See 9. 8.

cum sororibus legitima conubia, memoriae et tra-
goediae vestrae incestis gloriantur, quas vos libenter
et legitis et auditis ; sic et deos colitis incestos, cum
4 matre, cum filia, cum sorore coniunctos. Merito
igitur incestum penes vos saepe deprehenditur,
semper admittitur. Etiam nescientes, miseri, po-
testis in illicita proruere : dum Venerem promisce
spargitis, dum passim liberos seritis, dum etiam domi
natos alienae misericordiae frequenter exponitis,
necesse est in vestros recurrere, in filios inerrare.
Sic incesti fabulam nectitis, etiam cum conscientiam
non habetis.

6 "At nos pudorem non facie, sed mente praestamus :
unius matrimonii vinculo libenter inhaeremus, cupidi-
tate procreandi aut unam scimus aut nullam. Con-
vivis non tantum pudica colimus, sed et sobria : nec
enim indulgemus epulis aut convivium mero ducimus,
sed gravitate hilaritatem temperamus casto sermone ;
corpore castiore plerique inviolati corporis virginitate
perpetua fruuntur potius quam gloriantur : tantum
denique abest incesti cupido, ut nonnullis rubori sit
etiam pudica coniunctio.

6 "Nec de ultima statim plebe consistimus, si honores
vestros et purpuras recusamus, nec factiosi sumus, si
omnes unum bonum sapimus eadem congregati
quiete qua singuli, nec in angulis garruli, si audire
nos publice aut erubescitis aut timetis.

marriage with sisters is legal ; your legends and
tragedies glory in tales of incest, which you read
and listen to with relish ; the gods you worship
have incestuous relations with a mother, a daughter,
or a sister. No wonder then that among you cases 4
of the same offence are often exposed, and con-
stantly practised. Without knowing it you may
incur the risk of illicit connexions ; with promiscuous
amours, with children begotten here or there ;
with frequent exposure of legitimate children to the
mercy of strangers, you inevitably return upon your
own tracks and go wrong with children of your own.
Unwittingly you involve yourselves in a tragedy of
guilt.

"On the other hand our modesty lies not in out- 5
ward look, but in soul ; of our own free will we
cleave to the bond of single marriage ; in desire
of procreation we are content with one wife or with
none. Our feasts are conducted not only with
modesty, but in sobriety ; for we do not indulge in
delicacies, or prolong conviviality with wine ; but
temper our gaiety with gravity, with chaste con-
versation. Chaste still more in person, many find in
perpetual virginity food for satisfaction rather than
for boasting ; in a word, so far removed is the desire
for unchastity, that to some even chaste connexion
raises a blush.

"We do not take our place among the dregs of the 6
people, because we reject your official titles and
purples ; we are not sectarian in spirit, if in quiet
gatherings as in individual intercourse we are of
one mind for good ; neither are we 'talkative in
corners,' because you are either ashamed or afraid
to give us an open hearing. As for the daily in- 7

7 “Et quod in dies nostri numerus augetur, non est crimen erroris, sed testimonium laudis; nam in pulcro genere vivendi et perseverat suus et adcrescit
8 alienus. Sic nos denique non notaculo corporis, ut putatis, sed innocentiae ac modestiae signo facile dinoscimus: sic nos mutuo, quod doletis, amore diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus: sic nos, quod invidetis, fratres vocamus, ut unius dei parentis homines, ut consortes fidei, ut spei coheredes. Vos enim nec invicem adgnosceitis et in mutua odia saevitis, nec fratres vos nisi sane ad parricidium recognoscitis.

1 XXXII. “Putatis autem nos occultare quod colimus, si delubra et aras non habemus? Quod enim simulacrum deo fingam, cum, si recte existimes, sit dei homo ipse simulacrum? Templum quod ei extruam, cum totus hic mundus eius opere fabricatus eum capere non possit? Et cum homo latius maneam, intra unam aediculam vim tantae maiestatis includam?

2 Nonne melius in nostra dedicandus est mente? in nostro intimo consecrandus est pectore? Hostias et victimas deo offeram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut reiciam ei suum munus? Ingratum est, cum sit litabilis hostia bonus animus et pura mens et sincera

3 sententia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, deo supplicat; qui iustitiam, deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiatur deum; qui hominem periculo subripit, optimam victimam caedit. Haec nostra sacrificia, haec dei sacra sunt: sic apud nos religiosior est ille qui iustior.

4 “At enim quem colimus deum, nec ostendimus nec

crease in our numbers, that is no proof of error, but evidence of merit; for beauty of life encourages its followers to persevere, and strangers to join the ranks. We do in fact readily recognize one another, 8 not as you suppose by some token on the body, but by the sign manual of innocence and modesty; our bond, which you resent, consists in mutual love, for we know not how to hate; we call ourselves ‘brethren’ to which you object, as members of one family in God, as partners in one faith, as joint heirs in hope. You do not acknowledge one another, amid outbursts of mutual hate; you recognize no tie of brotherhood, except indeed for fratricidal murder.

XXXII. “Do you suppose we conceal our object 1 of worship because we have no shrines and altars? What image can I make of God when, rightly considered, man himself is an image of God? What temple can I build for him, when the whole universe, fashioned by his handiwork, cannot contain him? Shall I, a man, housed more spaciouly, confine within a tiny shrine power and majesty so great? Is not the 2 mind a better place of dedication? our inmost heart of consecration? Shall I offer to God victims and sacrifices which he has furnished for my use, and so reject his bounties? That were ingratitude, seeing that the acceptable sacrifice is a good spirit and a pure mind and a conscience without guile. He 3 who follows after innocence makes prayer to God; he who practises justice offers libations; he who abstains from fraud, propitiates; he who rescues another from peril, slays the best victim. These are our sacrifices, these our hallowed rites; with us, justice is the true measure of religion.

“But, you say, the God we worship we neither 4

videmus. Immo ex hoc deum credimus, quod eum sentire possumus, videre non possumus. In operibus enim eius et in mundi omnibus motibus virtutem eius semper praesentem aspicimus, cum tonat, 5 fulgurat, fulminat, cum serenat. Nec mireris, si deum non vides : vento et flatibus omnia impelluntur, vibrantur, agitantur, et sub oculis tamen non venit ventus et flatus. In solem adeo, qui videndi omnibus causa est, videre non possumus : radiis acies submovetur, obtutus intuentis hebetatur, et si diutius 6 inspicias, omnis visus extinguitur. Quid? ipsum solis artificem, illum luminis fontem possis sustinere, cum te ab eius fulgoribus avertas, a fulminibus abscondas? Deum oculis carnalibus vis videre, cum ipsam animam tuam, qua vivificaris et loqueris, nec aspicere possis nec tenere?

7 "Sed enim deus actum hominis ignorat et in caelo constitutus non potest aut omnes obire aut singulos nosse. Erras, o homo, et falleris : unde enim deus longe est, cum omnia caelestia terrenaque et quae extra istam orbis provinciam sunt, deo plena sint? Ubique non tantum nobis proximus, sed infusus est. 8 In solem adeo rursus intende : caelo adfixus, sed terris omnibus sparsus est ; pariter praesens ubique interest et miscetur omnibus, nusquam eius claritudo 9 violatur. Quanto magis deus auctor omnium ac speculator omnium, a quo nullum potest esse secretum, tenebris interest, interest cogitationibus nostris, quasi alteris tenebris! Non tantum sub illo agimus, sed et cum illo, ut prope dixerim, vivimus.

show nor see. Nay, but herein is the ground of our belief that we can perceive him, though we cannot see. For in his works, and in the motions of the universe, we behold his ever-present energy ; in the thunder and the lightning, in the thunderbolt or the clear sky. It is no cause for wonder if you see not God ; 5 wind and storm drive, toss, disorder all things, yet the eyes see not wind and storm. We cannot look upon the sun, which is to all the cause of vision ; its rays dazzle our eyesight ; the observer's vision is dimmed, and if you look too long, all power of sight is extinguished. How could you bear the sight of the author of the sun himself, the fountain of light, when you turn your face from his lightnings and hide from his shafts? Do you expect to see God with the 6 eyes of flesh, when you can neither see nor lay hold of your own soul, the organ of life and speech?

"But God, you say, heeds not the doings of man, 7 and from his place in heaven can neither visit all nor have knowledge of individuals. There, man, you err, and are deceived. God is never afar ; all things in heaven and earth, and those which are beyond the province of this world, are known of God, and full of him. Everywhere he is not merely close at hand, but interfused. Once more direct your thoughts 8 sunward : fixed in heaven, he yet scatters his rays over all lands ; equally present everywhere, he mingles and has part in all ; and nowhere is his brightness dimmed. How much more is God, the author 9 of all things and the spier-out of all, from whom nothing can be hid, present in darkness and present in that other darkness of our thoughts! Not only do we act under his eye, but with him, I may almost say, we have our life.

- 1 XXXIII. "Nec nobis de nostra frequentia blandiamur : multi nobis videmur, sed deo admodum pauci sumus. Nos gentes nationesque distinguimus : deo una domus est mundus hic totus. Reges tamen regni sui per officia ministrorum universa noverunt, deo indicii opus non est : non solum in oculis eius, sed in sinu vivimus.
- 2 "Sed Iudaeis nihil profuit, quod unum et ipsi deum aris atque templis maxima superstitione coluerunt. Ignorantia laberis si, priorum aut oblitus aut inscius,
- 3 posteriorum recordaris. Nam et ipsi deum nostrum, idem enim omnium deus est, [*dereliquerunt*]^a—quamdiu enim eum caste, innoxie religioseque coluerunt, quamdiu praeceptis salubribus obtemperaverunt, de paucis innumeri facti, de egentibus divites, de servientibus reges : modici multos, inermi armatos, dum fugiunt insequentes, dei iussu et elementis adnitentibus
- 4 obruerunt. Scripta eorum relege, vel, ut transeamus veteres, Flavi Iosephi, vel, si Romanis magis gaudes, Antoni Iuliani de Iudaeis require : iam scies, nequitia sua hanc eos meruisse fortunam, nec quidquam accidisse quod non sit his, si in contumacia
- 5 perseverarent, ante praedictum. Ita prius eos deseruisse comprehendes quam esse desertos nec, ut impie loqueris, cum deo suo captos, sed a deo ut disciplinae transfugas deditos.
- 1 XXXIV. "Ceterum de incendio mundi, aut improvisum ignem cadere aut deficere *umorem* non credere,

^a Judges vii. 22 ; Joshua x. 11.

XXXIII. "Nor need we plume ourselves upon our 1 numbers ; to ourselves we seem many, but to God we are very few. We distinguish nations and tribes : to God the whole world is a single household. Kings know the affairs of their kingdom through the official reports of ministers, but God has no need of signed reports : we live, not only in his eyes but in his bosom.

"But what did it profit the Jews that they too, 2 with reverence the most scrupulous, worshipped one God with altars and with temples ? ' There you are betrayed into ignorance, if you forget or ignore their earlier history, and remember only the later ; the 3 Jews, so long as they worshipped our God—one God, the same for all—in purity and innocence and holiness—so long as they obeyed his precepts of salvation, grew from a small people to a numberless, from being poor to rich, from being slaves to kings ; few in numbers and unarmed they overwhelmed armed hosts, and at the command of God with the assistance of the elements pursued them in their flight.^a Read 4 their own writings ; or omitting the ancients, turn to Flavius Josephus ; or, if you prefer Romans, consult Antonius Julianus on the Jews, and you will see that it was their own wickedness which brought them to misfortune, and that nothing happened to them which was not predicted in advance, if they persisted in rebelliousness. You will understand that they de- 5 serted God before he deserted them, and that they were not—as you profanely say—led captive with their God, but were handed over by God as deserters from his disciplines.

XXXIV. "As for the destruction of the world by 1 fire, it is a vulgar error to regard a sudden conflagra-

- 2 vulgaris erroris est. Quis enim sapientium dubitat, quis ignorat, omnia quae orta sunt occidere, quae facta sunt interire, caelum quoque cum omnibus quae caelo continentur, ita ut coepisse, desinere. *Omnem adeo mundum, si solem lunam reliqua astra desierit*¹ fontium dulcis aqua et aqua marina nutrire, in vim ignis abiturum, Stoicis constans opinio est, quod consumpto umore mundus hic omnis ignescet.
- 3 Et Epicureis de elementorum conflagratione et mundi ruina eadem ipsa sententia est. Loquitur
- 4 Plato partes orbis nunc inundare nunc alternis vicibus ardescere, et cum ipsum mundum perpetuum et insolubilem diceret esse fabricatum, addit tamen, ipsi artificii deo soli et solubilem et esse mortalem. Ita nihil mirum est, si ista moles ab eo, quo exstructa est, destruat.
- 5 "Animadvertis, philosophos eadem disputare quae dicimus, non quod nos simus eorum vestigia subsecuti, sed quod illi de divinis praedicationibus prophetarum umbram interpolatae veritatis imitati sint.
- 6 "Sic etiam condicionem renascendi sapientium clariores, Pythagoras primus et praecipuus Plato, corrupta et dimidiata fide tradiderunt: nam corporibus dissolutis solas animas volunt et perpetuo manere et in alia nova corpora saepius commear.
- 7 Addunt istis et illa ad retorquendam veritatem, in pecudes, aves, beluas hominum animas redire. Non philosophi sane studio, sed mimi convicio digni ista
- 8 sententia est. Sed ad propositum satis est, etiam

¹ Words have been adapted from Cicero, De Nat. Deor. iii. 37, to supply defects in the MS.

^a As in ch. 19 he refers to the *Timaeus*, 41 A, and a little lower to 42 B. But he seems to confuse Platonic theory

tion, or a failure of moisture as incredible. What 2 philosopher doubts, or does not know, that all things which have come into being die, that all things created perish, that heaven and all things contained therein cease as they began. So too the universe, if sun, moon and stars are deprived of the fountains of fresh water and the water of the seas, will disappear in a blaze of fire. The Stoics firmly maintain that when the moisture is dried out, the universe must all take fire. And Epicureans hold the same about the 3 conflagration of the elements and the destruction of the universe. Plato ^a speaks of parts of the world as 4 subject alternately to floods and to fire; and while maintaining that the universe itself was created eternal and indissoluble, adds that only God himself, who created it, can make it dissoluble and mortal. What wonder then if it should be destroyed in its entirety by him who built it up!

"The philosophers, you observe, use the same arguments as we; not that we have followed their footsteps, but that they, from the divine predictions of the prophets, have borrowed the shadow of a garbled truth.

"Similarly the more illustrious philosophers, Pyth- 6 agoras first, and more particularly Plato, have put on record a perverted half-truth about the conditions of the future life; on the dissolution of the body, the souls alone they hold remain eternal, and usually migrate into other new bodies. And further, to the 7 distortion of truth, they add that the souls of men pass into sheep, birds and beasts. Though the theory is more like a pantomime joke than serious philosophy, still it is so far to the point as showing a measure of 8

with Stoic doctrines of alternating cycles of flood and fire, and with Pythagorean transmigration.

in hoc sapientes vestros in aliquem modum nobiscum consonare.

- 9 "Ceterum quis tam stultus aut brutus est, ut audeat repugnare, hominem a deo, ut primum potuisse fingi ita posse denuo reformari? nihil esse post obitum, et ante ortum nihil fuisse? sicut de nihilo nasci licuit, ita de nihilo licere reparari? Porro difficilior est, id quod non sit incipere, quam id quod fuerit iterare.
- 10 Tu perire et deo credis, si quid oculis nostris hebetibus subtrahatur? Corpus omne sive arescit in pulverem sive in umorem solvitur vel in cinerem comprimitur vel in nidorem tenuatur, subducitur nobis, sed deo elementorum custodia reservatur. Nec, ut creditis, ullum damnum sepulturae timemus, sed veterem et meliorem consuetudinem humandi frequentamus.
- 11 "Vide adeo, quam insolacium nostri resurrectionem futuram omnis natura meditetur. Sol demergit et nascitur, astra labuntur et redeunt, flores occidunt et revivescunt, post senium arbusta frondescunt, semina nonnisi corrupta revirescunt: ita corpus in sepulcro, ut arbores in hiberno: occultant virorem ariditate
- 12 mentita. Quid festinas, ut cruda adhuc hieme revivescat et redeat? Expectandum nobis etiam corporis ver est.

"Nec ignoro plerosque conscientia meritorum nihil se esse post mortem magis optare quam credere: malunt enim extinguere penitus quam ad supplicia reparari. Quorum error augetur et in saeculo libertate remissa et dei patientia maxima, cuius quanto iudicium tardum, tanto magis iustum est.

agreement between your experts and ourselves. Furthermore, who is so stupid or senseless as to venture to maintain that man, originally formed by God, cannot be remade by him anew? that after death there is nothing, just as before birth there was nothing? that as he could be born out of nothing, so he can be reconstructed out of nothing? Besides, it is more difficult to start what does not exist, than to repeat what has existed. Do you suppose that, because a thing is withdrawn from our dull eyes, it is therefore lost also to God? The whole body, whether it crumbles into dust, or is resolved into moisture, or reduced to ashes, or attenuated into smoke, is withdrawn from us, but the elements remain in the keeping of God. We are not, as you imagine, afraid of damage arising from the mode of sepulture, though we adhere to the good old custom of earth-burial.

"And see too how, for our comfort, all nature suggests a future resurrection. The sun dips down and is born again; the stars sink and return; the flowers fall and renew their life; shrubs age and then break into leaf; seeds must decay in order to renew their life. The body in the grave is like trees in winter; they conceal their greenness under a show of dryness. Why press that in raw winter it should revive and return to life? We must wait too for the springtime of the body.

"Many, I am well aware, conscious of their deserts, hope rather than believe that annihilation follows death; they would rather be extinguished than restored for punishment. They are led astray by the impunity allowed them in life, and also by the infinite patience of God, whose judgements though slow are ever sure and just.

1 XXXV. "Et tamen admonentur homines doctissimorum libris et carminibus poetarum illius ignei fluminis et de Stygia palude saepius ambientis ardoris, quae cruciatibus aeternis praeparata, et daemonum indiciis et de oraculis prophetarum cognita, 2 tradiderunt. Et ideo apud eos etiam ipse rex Iuppiter per torrentes ripas et atram voraginem iurat religiose: destinata enim sibi cum suis 3 cultoribus poenam praescius perhorrescit. Nec tormentis aut modus ullus aut terminus. Illic sapiens ignis membra urit et reficit, carpit et nutrit. Sicut ignes fulminum corpora tangunt nec absumunt, sicut ignes Aetnaei montis et Vesuvi montis et ardentium ubique terrarum flagrant nec erogantur: ita poenale illud incendium non damnis ardentium pascitur, sed in exesa corporum laceratione nutritur.

4 "Eos autem merito torqueri, qui deum nesciunt, ut impios, ut iniustos, nisi profanus nemo deliberat, cum parentem omnium et omnium dominum non 5 minoris sceleris sit ignorare quam laedere. Et quamquam inperitia dei sufficiat ad poenam, ita ut notitia prosit ad veniam, tamen si vobiscum Christiani comparemur, quamvis in nonnullis disciplina nostra minor est, multo tamen vobis meliores 6 deprehendemur. Vos enim adulteria prohibetis et facitis, nos uxoribus nostris solummodo viri nascimur: vos scelera admissa punitis, apud nos et cogitare peccare est: vos conscios timetis, nos etiam conscientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus: denique de vestro numero carcer exaestuatur, Christianus ibi nullus nisi aut reus suae religionis aut profugus.

XXXV. "And yet writings of the learned, and 1 verses of the poets, warn men of that river of fire, and the flaming circles of the Stygian mere, prepared for eternal tortures, to which the declarations of demons and the oracles of prophets have borne witness. And 2 by that token King Jupiter himself makes solemn oath by the burning shores and the black ooze of Styx, with shuddering prescience dreading the punishment for him and his worshippers. And to these torments 3 there is neither bound nor end. The fire has skill to burn and to remake, to riddle and yet nourish, the limbs committed to it. As lightnings strike without consuming, and as the fires of Etna and Vesuvius, and volcanoes in other lands, burn on without exhaustion, so the penal fire does not undo those whom it burns, but feeds on the mangled fuel of bodies unconsumed.

"That those who know not God deserve their tor- 4 tures, as impious and unrighteous, none but an atheist doubts; it is as culpable to ignore as to wrong the parent of all, and Lord of all. And al- 5 though unacquaintance with God is sufficient reason for punishment, in the same way that knowledge avails for pardon, yet, if we Christians are compared with you, although in some cases our training falls short of yours, yet we shall be found on a much higher level than you. You forbid adultery, yet practise it; 6 we are born husbands for our wives alone; you punish crimes committed, with us the thought of crime is sin; you fear the voice of witnesses, we the sole voice of conscience which is ever at our side; and finally, the prisons are crowded to overflowing with your following and not a single Christian is there, except on charge of his religion, or as a renegade.

1 XXXVI. "Nec de fato quisquam aut solacium
 captet aut excuset eventum : sit sors fortunae, mens
 tamen libera est, et ideo actus hominis, non dignitas
 iudicatur. Quid enim aliud est fatum quam quod
 2 de unoquoque nostrum deus fatus est? Qui cum
 possit praescire materiam, pro meritis et qualitatibus
 singulorum etiam fata determinat. Ita in nobis non
 genitura plectitur, sed ingenii natura punitur. Ac
 de fato satis, vel si pauca, pro tempore, disputaturi
 alias et uberius et plenius.

3 "Ceterum quod plerique pauperes dicimur, non est
 infamia nostra, sed gloria : animus enim ut luxu
 4 solvitur, ita frugalitate firmatur. Et tamen quis
 potest pauper esse qui non eget, qui non inhiat alieno,
 qui deo dives est? Magis pauper ille est, qui cum
 5 multa habeat, plura desiderat. Dicam tamen quem-
 admodum sentio : nemo tam pauper potest esse
 quam natus est. Aves sine patrimonio vivunt et in
 diem pecua pascuntur : et haec nobis tamen nata
 sunt, quae omnia, si non concupiscimus, possidemus.
 6 Igitur ut qui viam terit, eo felicius quo levior incedit,
 ita beator in hoc itinere vivendi, qui paupertate se
 7 sublevari, non sub divitiarum onere suspirat. Et
 tamen facultates, si utiles putaremus, a deo posce-
 remus : utique indulgere posset aliquantum cuius
 est totum. Sed nos contemnere malumus opes
 quam continere, innocentiam magis cupimus, magis
 patientiam flagitamus, malumus nos bonos esse quam
 prodigos.

8 "Et quod corporis humana vitia sentimus et patimur,

^a The play on *fatum*, as "the thing said," cannot easily
 be reproduced in English.

XXXVI. "And let no one turn for refuge, or ex- 1
 cuse results by appeals to 'Fate.' Fortune may deal
 her lot, yet the mind is free; and therefore it is
 man's action, not his position, that is judged. What
 does 'Fate' mean,^a but God's 'pronouncement'
 upon each one of us? With full foreknowledge of the 2
 factors contained, God determines his pronouncements
 in accordance with individual deserts and qualities.
 The rod is not laid upon the condition of birth, but
 the nature of disposition entails the chastisement.
 But enough of Fate for the moment; we reserve it
 for fuller and more complete discussion elsewhere.^b

"That most of us are reputed poor is no disgrace, 3
 but a credit, for the mind is relaxed by luxury, and
 braced by frugality. Yet who can be poor, who is 4
 free from wants, who does not covet what is another's,
 who is rich towards God? The poor man is he who,
 having much, craves for more. I will tell you how I 5
 look at it : no man can be so poor as he is at birth.
 Birds have no settled income, the cattle feed from
 day to day; these things are provided for us, and
 all these we possess, if we do not covet more. As on 6
 the highroad he who walks lightest walks with most
 ease, so on the journey of life more happiness comes
 from lightening needs by poverty than from panting
 under a burden of wealth. Yet for a competence, 7
 put to good use, we may well ask God, and He who
 owns the whole may indulge us with a portion. We
 would rather despise wealth than hoard it; inno-
 cence comes first in our desires, patience in our in-
 treaties; we would rather be good than prodigal.

"The human and bodily infirmities which we experi- 8

^b Jerome refers to a reputed treatise *De Fato*, but on
 grounds of style questions its authenticity.

non est poena, militia est. Fortitudo enim infirmitatibus roboratur et calamitas saepius disciplina virtutis est; vires denique et mentis et corporis sine laboris exercitatione torpescunt. Omnes adeo vestri viri fortes, quos in exemplum praedicatis, aerumnis suis
 9 inclyti floruerunt. Itaque et nobis deus nec non potest subvenire nec despicit, cum sit et omnium rector et amator suorum, sed in adversis unumquemque explorat et examinat, ingenium singulorum periculis pensitat, usque ad extremam mortem voluntatem hominis sciscitatur, nihil sibi posse perire securus. Itaque ut aurum ignibus, sic nos discriminibus arguimur.

- 1 XXXVII. "Quam pulchrum spectaculum deo, cum Christianus cum dolore congregitur, cum adversum minas et supplicia et tormenta componitur, cum strepitum mortis et horrorem carnificis inridens inculcat, cum libertatem suam adversus reges et principes erigit, soli deo, cuius est, cedit, cum triumphator et victor ipsi, qui adversum se sententiam dixit, insultat! Vicit enim qui, quod contendit, obtinuit.
 2 Quis non miles sub oculis imperatoris audacius periculum provocat? Nemo enim praemium percipit ante experimentum. Et imperator tamen quod non habet, non dat: non potest propagare vitam, potest
 3 honestare militiam. At enim dei miles nec in dolore deseritur nec morte finitur. Sic Christianus miser videri potest, non potest inveniri. Vos ipsi calamitosos viros fertis ad caelum, ut Mucium Scaevolam, qui cum errasset in regem, perisset in hostibus, nisi

ence and suffer are not a punishment, but a school of discipline. For fortitude is braced by weaknesses, and calamity is frequently the school of virtue; strength, both of mind and body, grows slack without hard training. Your heroes, one and all, whom you quote for our example, won their renown by trials endured. God cannot fail to help us, nor does he 9 disregard, seeing that he is ruler of all and lover of his own; but in adversities he tries and tests us every one; weighs each man's disposition in the scales of peril; proves man's will even to the last extreme of death, with the assurance that in his sight nothing can perish. As gold is tried by fire so are we by ordeals.

XXXVII. "How fair a spectacle for God to see, 1 when a Christian comes face to face with pain, stands matched with threats and punishments and tortures, confronts with a smile the din of death and the hideous executioner, rises to the full height of his liberty in the face of kings and princes, and yields to God alone, Whose he is, as with victorious triumph he defies the judge who has passed sentence on him! For victory rests with him who wins that which he fought for. What soldier would not face risks more 2 boldly under the eyes of his general? None takes the prize before facing the ordeal. Yet the general cannot give what is not his; he cannot grant new lease of life, though he can do honour to good service. But the soldier of God is not forsaken in his pain, 3 neither does death end all. The Christian may seem miserable, but will not so be found. You yourselves extol to the skies victims of misadventure like Mucius Scaevola, who, having failed in his attempt upon the king, would have perished among the enemy, had he

- 4 dexteram perdidisset. Et quot ex nostris, non dextram solum, sed totum corpus uri, cremari sine ullis ciulatibus pertulerunt, cum dimitti praesertim
 5 haberent in sua potestate! Viros cum Mucio vel cum Aquilio aut Regulo comparo? Pueri et mulierculae nostrae cruces et tormenta, feras et omnes suppliciorum terriculas inspirata patientia doloris
 6 inludunt. Nec intellegitis, o miseri, neminem esse qui aut sine ratione velit poenam subire aut tormenta sine deo possit sustinere.
- 7 "Nisi forte vos decipit, quod deum nescientes divitiis adfluant, honoribus floreat, polleant potestatibus. Miseri in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidant altius. Hi enim, ut victimae ad supplicium saginantur, ut hostiae ad poenam coronantur: in hoc adeo quidam imperiis ac dominationibus eriguntur, ut ingenium eorum perditae mentis licentiae potestatis libere nundinentur. Absque enim notitia dei quae potest esse solida felicitas, cum mors sit? Somnio similis, ante-
 8 quam tenetur, elabitur. Rex es? Set tam times quam timeris, et quamlibet sis multo comitatu stipatus, ad periculum tamen solus es. Dives es? Sed fortunae male creditur et magno viatico breve
 9 vitae iter non instruitur, sed oneratur. Fascibus et purpuris gloriaris? Vanus error hominis et inanis cultus dignitatis, fulgore purpura, mente sordescere.

^a When King Porsena of Etruria was besieging Rome G. Mucius entered his camp by stealth, intending to assassinate him, but killed his secretary by mistake. Being seized, and threatened with torture, to show his constancy he put his right hand into the fire on the altar until it was consumed.

^b Manius Aquilius was in 89 B.C. sent, as Roman legate, to compel Mithradates, King of Pontus, to restore to their respective kingdoms the kings of Bithynia and Cappadocia.

not sacrificed his right hand.^a How many of our 4 number have, without a moan, allowed not their right hand only, but their whole body to be burned to ashes, when it was within their power to win release! Am I comparing *men* only with Mucius or Aquilius, 5 or Regulus? ^b Nay, our boys and tender women are so inspired to sufferance of pain that they laugh to scorn crosses and tortures, wild beasts and all the paraphernalia of punishment. Poor fools! you do 6 not see that without reason no one would voluntarily submit to punishment, or without God's help endure the tortures.

"You may be deceived by the fact that men who 7 know not God abound in riches, are loaded with honours and set in the seats of authority. Unhappy they, who are raised to high place, that they may fall the lower! They are like victims fattened for sacrifice, and garlanded for execution: there are men so lifted up by sovereignty and dominion, that in an abandon of unreason, license, and power they freely traffic away their humanity.^c For, apart from 8 a knowledge of God, what solid base has happiness, when—there stands death! Like a dream, before it is grasped it slips away. Are you king? You feel as 9 much fear as you inspire, and, however numerous your bodyguard, in the presence of danger you are alone. Are you rich? Yet fortune is ill to trust, and for life's brief journey a big provision-train is more burden than equipment. Are fasces and purples your 10 pride? It is a vain will-of-the-wisp and an empty show of state to shine in purple and be squalid in mind.

He fell into the hands of Mithradates, who poured molten gold down his throat. On Regulus see ch. 26.

^c A scathing description, it would seem, of Commodus.

Nobilitate generosus es? Parentes tuos laudas? Omnes tamen pari sorte nascimur, sola virtute distinguimur.

11 "Nos igitur, qui moribus et pudore censemur, merito malis voluptatibus et pompis vestris et spectaculis abstinemus, quorum et de sacris originem novimus et noxia blandimenta damnamus. Nam in ludis curulibus quis non horreat populi in se rixantis insaniam? in gladiatorii homicidii disciplinam?

12 In scenicis etiam non minor furor et turpitudine prolixior: nunc enim mimus vel exponit adulteria vel monstrat, nunc enervis histrio amorem dum fingit, infligit: idem deos vestros induendo stupra, suspiria, odia dedecorat, idem simulatis doloribus lacrimas vestras vanis gestibus et nutibus provocat: sic homicidium in vero flagitatis, in mendacio fletis.

1 XXXVIII. "Quod vero sacrificiorum reliquias et pocula delibata contemnimus, non confessio timoris est, sed verae libertatis adsertio. Nam, etsi omne quod nascitur, ut inviolabile dei munus, nullo opere conrumpitur, abstinemus tamen, ne quis existimet aut daemoniis, quibus libatum est, cedere aut nos nostrae religionis pudere.

2 "Quis autem ille qui dubitat, vernis indulgere nos floribus, cum carparamus et rosam veris et lilium et quicquid aliud in floribus blandi coloris et odoris est? His enim et sparsis utimur ac solutis et sertis mollibus colla complectimur. Sane quod caput non coronamus, ignoscite: auram bonam floris naribus ducere, non occipitio capillisve solemus haurire.

Are you of noble lineage? proud of your ancestry? Yet we are all born equal; virtue alone gives mark.

"We, whose values rest on morals and on modesty, 11 have good reason to abstain from the vicious delights of your processions and spectacles; we know the rites from which they originated and condemn their pernicious attractions. At the curule games, who would not shrink from the frenzy of the struggling mob? or the organized bloodshed of the gladiatorial shows? In your stage plays there is the same wild 12 passion, with indecencies still more prolonged; at one a farcer describes or acts adulteries; at another an actor expends his forces on the amours which he depicts; by masquerading their intrigues, their sighs, and their hates, he brings disgrace upon your gods. For feigned sorrows he moves you to tears by unreal nods and gestures, till in the arena you clamour for the bloodshed for which upon the stage you weep.

XXXVIII. "As regards our rejection of the sacrifi 1 cial leaveings and cups used for libation, it is not a confession of fear, but an assertion of true liberty. Though everything created, as the inviolable gift of God, cannot be made corrupt, yet we abstain from participation, to show that we have no truck with the demons to whom the libations are poured, and are not ashamed of our own religion.

"Who can deny that we delight in the flowers of 2 spring, when we gather the spring rose and the lily and every flower with charm of hue and smell? We strew or wear them loose, we twine soft garlands for our necks. You must excuse us for not crowning our heads; our custom is to sniff sweet flowerperfumes with our nose, not to inhale them with the scalp or the back hair.

3 "Nec mortuos coronamus. Ego vos in hoc magis
 miror, quemadmodum tribuatis exanimi aut sentienti
 facem aut non sentienti coronam, cum et beatus non
 4 egeat et miser non gaudeat floribus. At enim nos
 exsequias adornamus eadem tranquillitate qua
 vivimus, nec adnectimus arescentem coronam, sed
 a deo aeternis floribus vividam sustinemus: quieti,
 modesti, dei nostri liberalitate securi spem futurae
 felicitatis fide praesentis eius maiestatis animamus.
 Sic et beati resurgimus et futuri contemplationē iam
 vivimus.

5 "Proinde Socrates scurra Atticus viderit, nihil se
 scire confessus, testimonio licet fallacissimi daemonis
 gloriosus, Arcesilas quoque et Carneades et Pyrrho
 et omnis Academicorum multitudo deliberet,
 Simonides etiam in perpetuum conperendinet:
 philosophorum supercilia contemnimus, quos cor-
 ruptores et adulteros novimus et tyrannos et semper
 6 adversus sua vitia facundos. Nos, non habitu sapien-
 tiam sed mente praeferimus, non eloquimur magna
 sed vivimus, gloriamur nos consecutos quod illi summa
 intentione quaesiverunt nec invenire potuerunt.

7 "Quid ingrati sumus, quid nobis invidemus, si
 veritas divinitatis nostri temporis aetate maturuit?

"Nor do we place wreaths on the dead. I am sur- 3
 prised at your custom of giving to the dead a torch
 if he is still conscious, or a wreath if he is no longer
 so: if he is happy, he needs no flowers, if unhappy,
 he can take no pleasure in them. Our funeral rites 4
 we order with the same quietness as our lives; we
 twine no fading crown, but expect from God the
 crown that blossoms with eternal flowers; in quiet-
 ness and modesty, safe in the bountifulness of our
 God, we keep quick our hope of future happiness
 with faith in his present majesty. So do we rise
 again to bliss and live in contemplation of that which
 is to come.

"For the rest then, let Socrates look to himself! 5
 Socrates, 'the buffoon of Athens' (as Zeno called him),
 who confessed that he knew nothing, though he
 boasted of the promptings of a deceiving demon;
 Arcesilas too, and Carneades, and Pyrrho, and the
 whole host of the Academics, let them argue on!
 and Simonides^a procrastinate for ever! we think
 scorn of the high-brow philosophers, corrupters of
 youth, adulterers, and tyrants, for ever declaiming
 against their own pet vices. As for us, the wisdom 6
 we display lies not in outward dress, but in the
 mind; we do not preach great things, but we live
 them; our boast is that we have won what they
 with the utmost strain have sought, yet could not
 find.

"What cause have we to be ungrateful or dissatis- 7
 fied, if the truth of godhead has in this our time come

^a Referring to the story narrated in ch. 13.

Fruamur bono nostro et recti sententiam temperemus : cohibeatur superstitio, impietas expietur, vera religio reservetur."

XXXIX. Cum Octavius perorasset, aliquamdiu nos ad silentium stupefacti intentos vultus tenebamus, et quod ad me est, magnitudine admirationis evanui, quod ea, quae facilius est sentire quam dicere, et argumentis et exemplis et lectionum auctoritatibus adornasset et quod malevolos isdem illis quibus armantur, philosophorum telis retudisset, ostendisset etiam veritatem non tantummodo facilem sed et favorabilem.

1 XL. Dum istaec igitur apud me tacitus evolvo, Caecilius erupit : "Ego Octavio meo plurimum quantum, sed et mihi gratulor nec expecto sententiam. Vicinus et ita : ut improbe, usurpo victoriam. Nam ut ille mei victor est, ita ego triumphator erroris.

2 "Itaque quod pertineat ad summam quaestionis, et de providentia fateor et de deo cedo et de sectae iam nostrae sinceritate consentio. Etiam nunc tamen aliqua consubsidunt non obstrepentia veritati, sed perfectae institutioni necessaria, de quibus crastino, quod iam sol occasui declivis est, ut de toto congruentes promptius requiremus."

3 "At ego, inquam, prolixius omnium nostrum vice gaudeo, quod etiam mihi Octavius vicerit, cum maxima iudicandi mihi invidia detracta sit. Nec tamen possum meritum eius verborum laudibus repensare : testimonium et hominis et unius in-

to completion? Let us enjoy our good things, co-ordinate our sense of right, keeping check on superstition, amending all impiety, and holding fast to true religion."

XXXIX. When Octavius had thus closed, we kept our eyes fixed on him for a while, in silent amaze. For myself, I was lost in admiration at the way in which by argument and illustration and quotation of authorities he had handled subjects easier to feel than to express, and by the way in which he had disarmed ill-will by the very weapons which the philosophers use for their attack, and had set forth the truth in a guise at once so easy and so attractive.

XL. As I was turning over these thoughts in silence, 1 Caecilius burst out : "Congratulations ever so many, dear Octavius ! and a share for me too ! I need not wait for the ruling. We are quits, as it stands, for I too have the face to claim a victory ! If he has been victorious over me, I too have had my triumph over error.

"On the main issue I admit his pleas for Providence, 2 and his belief in God, and as to the sincerity of your sect—now my own—I am at one. But there remain still some minor difficulties, not contradictions fatal to the truth, but yet requiring more complete elucidation ; these—for the sun is already dropping towards its setting—we shall do better to discuss to-morrow, in agreement on general principles."

"No one of us," I said, "has cause for heartier 3 satisfaction than I in the victory won by Octavius ; it relieves me from the invidious task of passing judgement. But no words of praise are adequate to his deserts. Man's witness—and that too an individual's

MINUCIUS FELIX

firmum est: habet dei munus eximium, a quo et inspiratus oravit et obtinuit adiutus."

- 4 Post haec laeti hilaresque discessimus, Caecilius quod crediderit, Octavius quod vicerit, ego et quod hic crediderit et hic vicerit.

OCTAVIUS, XL. 3-4

—is but weak; his gift and his reward is from God, to whose help and inspiration he owes his eloquence and his success."

Thereupon we went our way cheerful and light-hearted—Caecilius, in belief attained, Octavius, in a victory won, I in my friend's belief and my friend's victory.