

# AUGUSTINE

## CITY OF GOD: BOOK 19

### Chapter 1.— That Varro Has Made Out that Two Hundred and Eighty-Eight Different Sects of Philosophy Might Be Formed by the Various Opinions Regarding the Supreme Good.

As I see that I have still to discuss the fit destinies of the two cities, the earthly and the heavenly, I must first explain, so far as the limits of this work allow me, the reasonings by which men have attempted to make for themselves a happiness in this unhappy life, in order that it may be evident, not only from divine authority, but also from such reasons as can be adduced to unbelievers, how the empty dreams of the philosophers differ from the hope which God gives to us, and from the substantial fulfillment of it which He will give us as our blessedness. Philosophers have expressed a great variety of diverse opinions regarding the ends of goods and of evils, and this question they have eagerly canvassed, that they might, if possible, discover what makes a man happy. For the end of our good is that for the sake of which other things are to be desired, while it is to be desired for its own sake; and the end of evil is that on account of which other things are to be shunned, while it is avoided on its own account. Thus, by the *end of good*, we at present mean, not that by which good is destroyed, so that it no longer exists, but that by which it is finished, so that it becomes complete; and by the *end of evil* we mean, not that which abolishes it, but that which completes its development.

These two ends, therefore, are the supreme good and the supreme evil; and, as I have said, those who have in this vain life professed the study of wisdom have been at great pains to discover these ends, and to obtain the supreme good and avoid the supreme evil in this life. And although they erred in a variety of ways, yet natural insight has prevented them from wandering from the truth so far that they have not placed the supreme good and evil, some in the soul, some in the body, and some in both. From this tripartite distribution of the sects of philosophy, Marcus Varro, in his book *De Philosophia*, has drawn so large a variety of opinions, that, by a subtle and minute analysis of distinctions, he numbers without difficulty as many as 288 sects—not that these have actually existed, but sects which are possible.

To illustrate briefly what he means, I must begin with his own introductory statement in the above-mentioned book, that there are four things which men desire, as it were by nature without a master, without the help of any instruction, without industry or the art of living which is called virtue, and which is certainly learned: either pleasure, which is an agreeable stirring of the bodily sense; or repose, which excludes every bodily inconvenience; or both these, which Epicurus calls by the one

1 name, pleasure; or the primary objects of nature, which comprehend the things already named and  
other things, either bodily, such as health, and safety, and integrity of the members, or spiritual, such  
as the greater and less mental gifts that are found in men. Now these four things— pleasure, repose,  
the two combined, and the primary objects of nature— exist in us in such sort that we must either  
desire virtue on their account, or them for the sake of virtue, or both for their own sake; and  
consequently there arise from this distinction twelve sects, for each is by this consideration tripled.

5 I will illustrate this in one instance, and, having done so, it will not be difficult to understand the  
others. According, then, as bodily pleasure is subjected, preferred, or united to virtue, there are three  
sects. It is subjected to virtue when it is chosen as subservient to virtue. Thus it is a duty of virtue to  
live for one's country, and for its sake to beget children, neither of which can be done without bodily  
pleasure. For there is pleasure in eating and drinking, pleasure also in sexual intercourse, but when it  
is preferred to virtue, it is desired for its own sake, and virtue is chosen only for its sake, and to effect  
10 nothing else than the attainment or preservation of bodily pleasure. And this, indeed, is to make life  
hideous; for where virtue is the slave of pleasure it no longer deserves the name of virtue. Yet even  
this disgraceful distortion has found some philosophers to patronize and defend it. Then virtue is  
united to pleasure when neither is desired for the other's sake, but both for their own. And therefore,  
as pleasure, according as it is subjected, preferred, or united to virtue, makes three sects, so also do  
repose, pleasure and repose combined, and the prime natural blessings, make their three sects each.  
For as men's opinions vary, and these four things are sometimes subjected, sometimes preferred, and  
15 sometimes united to virtue, there are produced twelve sects.

But this number again is doubled by the addition of one difference, viz., the social life; for whoever  
attaches himself to any of these sects does so either for his own sake alone, or for the sake of a  
companion, for whom he ought to wish what he desires for himself. And thus there will be twelve of  
those who think some one of these opinions should be held for their own sakes, and other twelve  
who decide that they ought to follow this or that philosophy not for their own sakes only, but also  
20 for the sake of others whose good they desire as their own. These twenty-four sects again are  
doubled, and become forty-eight by adding a difference taken from the New Academy. For each of  
these four and twenty sects can hold and defend their opinion as certain, as the Stoics defended the  
position that the supreme good of man consisted solely in virtue; or they can be held as probable,  
but not certain, as the New Academics did. There are, therefore, twenty-four who hold their  
philosophy as certainly true, other twenty-four who hold their opinions as probable, but not certain.

25 Again, as each person who attaches himself to any of these sects may adopt the mode of life either of  
the Cynics or of the other philosophers, this distinction will double the number, and so make  
ninety-six sects. Then, lastly, as each of these sects may be adhered to either by men who love a life  
of ease, as those who have through choice or necessity addicted themselves to study, or by men who  
love a busy life, as those who, while philosophizing, have been much occupied with state affairs and  
public business, or by men who choose a mixed life, in imitation of those who have apportioned  
their time partly to erudite leisure, partly to necessary business: by these differences the number of  
30 the sects is tripled, and becomes 288.

I have thus, as briefly and lucidly as I could, given in my own words the opinions which Varro  
expresses in his book. But how he refutes all the rest of these sects, and chooses one, the Old

1 Academy, instituted by Plato, and continuing to Polemo, the fourth teacher of that school of  
philosophy which held that their system was certain; and how on this ground he distinguishes it  
from the New Academy, which began with Polemo's successor Arcesilaus, and held that all things are  
uncertain; and how he seeks to establish that the Old Academy was as free from error as from  
doubt—all this, I say, were too long to enter upon in detail, and yet I must not altogether pass it by  
in silence.

5 Varro then rejects, as a first step, all those differences which have multiplied the number of sects; and  
the ground on which he does so is that they are not differences about the supreme good. He  
maintains that in philosophy a sect is created only by its having an opinion of its own different from  
other schools on the point of the ends-in-chief. For man has no other reason for philosophizing than  
that he may be happy; but that which makes him happy is itself the supreme good. In other words,  
the supreme good is the reason of philosophizing; and therefore that cannot be called a sect of  
10 philosophy which pursues no way of its own towards the supreme good. Thus, when it is asked  
whether a wise man will adopt the social life, and desire and be interested in the supreme good of his  
friend as in his own, or will, on the contrary, do all that he does merely for his own sake, there is no  
question here about the supreme good, but only about the propriety of associating or not associating  
a friend in its participation: whether the wise man will do this not for his own sake, but for the sake  
of his friend in whose good he delights as in his own. So, too, when it is asked whether all things  
about which philosophy is concerned are to be considered uncertain, as by the New Academy, or  
15 certain, as the other philosophers maintain, the question here is not what end should be pursued, but  
whether or not we are to believe in the substantial existence of that end; or, to put it more plainly,  
whether he who pursues the supreme good must maintain that it is a true good, or only that it  
appears to him to be true, though possibly it may be delusive,— both pursuing one and the same  
good. The distinction, too, which is founded on the dress and manners of the Cynics, does not  
touch the question of the chief good, but only the question whether he who pursues that good which  
seems to himself true should live as do the Cynics. There were, in fact, men who, though they  
20 pursued different things as the supreme good, some choosing pleasure, others virtue, yet adopted  
that mode of life which gave the Cynics their name. Thus, whatever it is which distinguishes the  
Cynics from other philosophers, this has no bearing on the choice and pursuit of that good which  
constitutes happiness. For if it had any such bearing, then the same habits of life would necessitate  
the pursuit of the same chief good, and diverse habits would necessitate the pursuit of different ends.

25 **Chapter 2.— How Varro, by Removing All the Differences Which Do  
Not Form Sects, But are Merely Secondary Questions, Reaches Three  
Definitions of the Chief Good, of Which We Must Choose One.**

30 The same may be said of those three kinds of life, the life of studious leisure and search after truth,  
the life of easy engagement in affairs, and the life in which both these are mingled. When it is asked,  
which of these should be adopted, this involves no controversy about the end of good, but inquires  
which of these three puts a man in the best position for finding and retaining the supreme good. For  
this good, as soon as a man finds it, makes him happy; but lettered leisure, or public business, or the

1 alternation of these, do not necessarily constitute happiness. Many, in fact, find it possible to adopt one or other of these modes of life, and yet to miss what makes a man happy.

The question, therefore, regarding the supreme good and the supreme evil, and which distinguishes sects of philosophy, is one; and these questions concerning the social life, the doubt of the Academy, the dress and food of the Cynics, the three modes of life— the active, the contemplative, and the  
5 mixed— these are different questions, into none of which the question of the chief good enters. And therefore, as Marcus Varro multiplied the sects to the number of 288 (or whatever larger number he chose) by introducing these four differences derived from the social life, the New Academy, the Cynics, and the threefold form of life, so, by removing these differences as having no bearing on the supreme good, and as therefore not constituting what can properly be called sects, he returns to those twelve schools which concern themselves with inquiring what that good is which makes man  
10 happy, and he shows that one of these is true, the rest false.

In other words, he dismisses the distinction founded on the threefold mode of life, and so decreases the whole number by two-thirds, reducing the sects to ninety-six. Then, putting aside the Cynic peculiarities, the number decreases by a half, to forty-eight. Taking away next the distinction occasioned by the hesitancy of the New Academy, the number is again halved, and reduced to twenty-four. Treating in a similar way the diversity introduced by the consideration of the social life,  
15 there are left but twelve, which this difference had doubled to twenty-four. Regarding these twelve, no reason can be assigned why they should not be called sects. For in them the sole inquiry is regarding the supreme good and the ultimate evil—that is to say, regarding the supreme good, for this being found, the opposite evil is thereby found.

Now, to make these twelve sects, he multiplies by three these four things— pleasure, repose, pleasure and repose combined, and the primary objects of nature which Varro calls *primigenia*. For as these four things are sometimes subordinated to virtue, so that they seem to be desired not for their own  
20 sake, but for virtue's sake; sometimes preferred to it, so that virtue seems to be necessary not on its own account, but in order to attain these things; sometimes joined with it, so that both they and virtue are desired for their own sakes—we must multiply the four by three, and thus we get twelve sects. But from those four things Varro eliminates three— pleasure, repose, pleasure and repose combined— not because he thinks these are not worthy of the place assigned them, but because they are included in the primary objects of nature. And what need is there, at any rate, to make a threefold division out of these two ends, pleasure and repose, taking them first severally and then  
25 conjunctly, since both they, and many other things besides, are comprehended in the primary objects of nature? Which of the three remaining sects must be chosen? This is the question that Varro dwells upon. For whether one of these three or some other be chosen, reason forbids that more than one be true. This we shall afterwards see; but meanwhile let us explain as briefly and distinctly as we can how Varro makes his selection from these three, that is, from the sects which severally hold that the primary objects of nature are to be desired for virtue's sake, that virtue is to be desired for their sake, and that virtue and these objects are to be desired each for their own sake.

### Chapter 3.— Which of the Three Leading Opinions Regarding the Chief Good Should Be Preferred, According to Varro, Who Follows Antiochus and the Old Academy.

Which of these three is true and to be adopted he attempts to show in the following manner. As it is the supreme good, not of a tree, or of a beast, or of a god, but of man that philosophy is in quest of, he thinks that, first of all, we must define man. He is of opinion that there are two parts in human nature, body and soul, and makes no doubt that of these two the soul is the better and by far the more worthy part. But whether the soul alone is the man, so that the body holds the same relation to it as a horse to the horseman, this he thinks has to be ascertained. The horseman is not a horse and a man, but only a man, yet he is called a horseman, because he is in some relation to the horse. Again, is the body alone the man, having a relation to the soul such as the cup has to the drink? For it is not the cup and the drink it contains which are called the cup, but the cup alone; yet it is so called because it is made to hold the drink. Or, lastly, is it neither the soul alone nor the body alone, but both together, which are man, the body and the soul being each a part, but the whole man being both together, as we call two horses yoked together a pair, of which pair the near and the off horse is each a part, but we do not call either of them, no matter how connected with the other, a pair, but only both together?

Of these three alternatives, then, Varro chooses the third, that man is neither the body alone, nor the soul alone, but both together. And therefore the highest good, in which lies the happiness of man, is composed of goods of both kinds, both bodily and spiritual. And consequently he thinks that the primary objects of nature are to be sought for their own sake, and that virtue, which is the art of living, and can be communicated by instruction, is the most excellent of spiritual goods. This virtue, then, or art of regulating life, when it has received these primary objects of nature which existed independently of it, and prior to any instruction, seeks them all, and itself also, for its own sake; and it uses them, as it also uses itself, that from them all it may derive profit and enjoyment, greater or less, according as they are themselves greater or less; and while it takes pleasure in all of them, it despises the less that it may obtain or retain the greater when occasion demands. Now, of all goods, spiritual or bodily, there is none at all to compare with virtue. For virtue makes a good use both of itself and of all other goods in which lies man's happiness; and where it is absent, no matter how many good things a man has, they are not for his good, and consequently should not be called good things while they belong to one who makes them useless by using them badly.

The life of man, then, is called happy when it enjoys virtue and these other spiritual and bodily good things without which virtue is impossible. It is called happier if it enjoys some or many other good things which are not essential to virtue; and happiest of all, if it lacks not one of the good things which pertain to the body and the soul. For life is not the same thing as virtue, since not every life, but a wisely regulated life, is virtue; and yet, while there can be life of some kind without virtue, there cannot be virtue without life. This I might apply to memory and reason, and such mental faculties; for these exist prior to instruction, and without them there cannot be any instruction, and consequently no virtue, since virtue is learned. But bodily advantages, such as swiftness of foot, beauty, or strength, are not essential to virtue, neither is virtue essential to them, and yet they are

1 good things; and, according to our philosophers, even these advantages are desired by virtue for its own sake, and are used and enjoyed by it in a becoming manner.

They say that this happy life is also social, and loves the advantages of its friends as its own, and for their sake wishes for them what it desires for itself, whether these friends live in the same family, as a wife, children, domestics; or in the locality where one's home is, as the citizens of the same town; or  
5 in the world at large, as the nations bound in common human brotherhood; or in the universe itself, comprehended in the heavens and the earth, as those whom they call gods, and provide as friends for the wise man, and whom we more familiarly call angels. Moreover, they say that, regarding the supreme good and evil, there is no room for doubt, and that they therefore differ from the New Academy in this respect, and they are not concerned whether a philosopher pursues those ends which they think true in the Cynic dress and manner of life or in some other. And, lastly, in regard to the three modes of life, the contemplative, the active, and the composite, they declare in favor of  
10 the third. That these were the opinions and doctrines of the Old Academy, Varro asserts on the authority of Antiochus, Cicero's master and his own, though Cicero makes him out to have been more frequently in accordance with the Stoics than with the Old Academy. But of what importance is this to us, who ought to judge the matter on its own merits, rather than to understand accurately what different men have thought about it?

#### 15 **Chapter 4.— What the Christians Believe Regarding the Supreme Good and Evil, in Opposition to the Philosophers, Who Have Maintained that the Supreme Good is in Themselves.**

20 If, then, we be asked what the city of God has to say upon these points, and, in the first place, what its opinion regarding the supreme good and evil is, it will reply that life eternal is the supreme good, death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape the other we must live rightly. And thus it is written, The just lives by faith, (Habakkuk 2:4) for we do not as yet see our good, and must therefore live by faith; neither have we in ourselves power to live rightly, but can do so only if He who has given us faith to believe in His help do help us when we believe and pray. As for those  
25 who have supposed that the sovereign good and evil are to be found in this life, and have placed it either in the soul or the body, or in both, or, to speak more explicitly, either in pleasure or in virtue, or in both; in repose or in virtue, or in both; in pleasure and repose, or in virtue, or in all combined; in the primary objects of nature, or in virtue, or in both—all these have, with a marvelous shallowness, sought to find their blessedness in this life and in themselves. Contempt has been poured upon such ideas by the Truth, saying by the prophet, The Lord knows the thoughts of men (or, as the Apostle Paul cites the passage, The Lord knows the thoughts of the *wise*) that they are  
30 vain.

For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life? Cicero, in the *Consolation* on the death of his daughter, has spent all his ability in lamentation; but how inadequate was even

1 his ability here? For when, where, how, in this life can these primary objects of nature be possessed  
so that they may not be assailed by unforeseen accidents? Is the body of the wise man exempt from  
any pain which may dispel pleasure, from any disquietude which may banish repose? The  
amputation or decay of the members of the body puts an end to its integrity, deformity blights its  
beauty, weakness its health, lassitude its vigor, sleepiness or sluggishness its activity—and which of  
5 these is it that may not assail the flesh of the wise man? Comely and fitting attitudes and movements  
of the body are numbered among the prime natural blessings; but what if some sickness makes the  
members tremble? What if a man suffers from curvature of the spine to such an extent that his hands  
reach the ground, and he goes upon all-fours like a quadruped? Does not this destroy all beauty and  
grace in the body, whether at rest or in motion?

What shall I say of the fundamental blessings of the soul, sense and intellect, of which the one is  
given for the perception, and the other for the comprehension of truth? But what kind of sense is it  
10 that remains when a man becomes deaf and blind? Where are reason and intellect when disease  
makes a man delirious? We can scarcely, or not at all, refrain from tears, when we think of or see the  
actions and words of such frantic persons, and consider how different from and even opposed to  
their own sober judgment and ordinary conduct their present demeanor is. And what shall I say of  
those who suffer from demoniacal possession? Where is their own intelligence hidden and buried  
while the malignant spirit is using their body and soul according to his own will? And who is quite  
sure that no such thing can happen to the wise man in this life? Then, as to the perception of truth,  
15 what can we hope for even in this way while in the body, as we read in the true book of Wisdom,  
The corruptible body weighs down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle presses down the mind that  
muses upon many things? (Wisdom 9:15) And eagerness, or desire of action, if this is the right  
meaning to put upon the Greek ὄρμη, is also reckoned among the primary advantages of nature; and  
yet is it not this which produces those pitiable movements of the insane, and those actions which we  
shudder to see, when sense is deceived and reason deranged?

20 In fine, virtue itself, which is not among the primary objects of nature, but succeeds to them as the  
result of learning, though it holds the highest place among human good things, what is its  
occupation save to wage perpetual war with vices—not those that are outside of us, but within; not  
other men's, but our own—a war which is waged especially by that virtue which the Greeks call  
σωφροσυνη, and we temperance, and which bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them from winning the  
consent of the spirit to wicked deeds? For we must not fancy that there is no vice in us, when, as the  
apostle says, The flesh lusts against the spirit; (Galatians 5:17) for to this vice there is a contrary  
25 virtue, when, as the same writer says, The spirit lusts against the flesh. For these two, he says, are  
contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would. But what is it we wish  
to do when we seek to attain the supreme good, unless that the flesh should cease to lust against the  
spirit, and that there be no vice in us against which the spirit may lust? And as we cannot attain to  
this in the present life, however ardently we desire it, let us by God's help accomplish at least this, to  
preserve the soul from succumbing and yielding to the flesh that lusts against it, and to refuse our  
consent to the perpetration of sin. Far be it from us, then, to fancy that while we are still engaged in  
30 this intestine war, we have already found the happiness which we seek to reach by victory. And who  
is there so wise that he has no conflict at all to maintain against his vices?

1 What shall I say of that virtue which is called prudence? Is not all its vigilance spent in the  
discernment of good from evil things, so that no mistake may be admitted about what we should  
desire and what avoid? And thus it is itself a proof that we are in the midst of evils, or that evils are in  
us; for it teaches us that it is an evil to consent to sin, and a good to refuse this consent. And yet this  
evil, to which prudence teaches and temperance enables us not to consent, is removed from this life  
neither by prudence nor by temperance. And justice, whose office it is to render to every man his  
5 due, whereby there is in man himself a certain just order of nature, so that the soul is subjected to  
God, and the flesh to the soul, and consequently both soul and flesh to God—does not this virtue  
demonstrate that it is as yet rather laboring towards its end than resting in its finished work? For the  
soul is so much the less subjected to God as it is less occupied with the thought of God; and the flesh  
is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the spirit. So long,  
therefore, as we are beset by this weakness, this plague, this disease, how shall we dare to say that we  
are safe? And if not safe, then how can we be already enjoying our final beatitude? Then that virtue  
10 which goes by the name of fortitude is the plainest proof of the ills of life, for it is these ills which it  
is compelled to bear patiently. And this holds good, no matter though the ripest wisdom co-exists  
with it.

And I am at a loss to understand how the Stoic philosophers can presume to say that these are no  
ills, though at the same time they allow the wise man to commit suicide and pass out of this life if  
they become so grievous that he cannot or ought not to endure them. But such is the stupid pride of  
15 these men who fancy that the supreme good can be found in this life, and that they can become  
happy by their own resources, that their wise man, or at least the man whom they fancifully depict as  
such, is always happy, even though he become blind, deaf, dumb, mutilated, racked with pains, or  
suffer any conceivable calamity such as may compel him to make away with himself; and they are  
not ashamed to call the life that is beset with these evils happy. O happy life, which seeks the aid of  
death to end it? If it is happy, let the wise man remain in it; but if these ills drive him out of it, in  
what sense is it happy? Or how can they say that these are not evils which conquer the virtue of  
20 fortitude, and force it not only to yield, but so to rave that it in one breath calls life happy and  
recommends it to be given up? For who is so blind as not to see that if it were happy it would not be  
fled from? And if they say we should flee from it on account of the infirmities that beset it, why then  
do they not lower their pride and acknowledge that it is miserable? Was it, I would ask, fortitude or  
weakness which prompted Cato to kill himself? For he would not have done so had he not been too  
weak to endure Cæsar's victory. Where, then, is his fortitude? It has yielded, it has succumbed, it has  
been so thoroughly overcome as to abandon, forsake, flee this happy life. Or was it no longer happy?  
25 Then it was miserable. How, then, were these not evils which made life miserable, and a thing to be  
escaped from?

And therefore those who admit that these are evils, as the Peripatetics do, and the Old Academy, the  
sect which Varro advocates, express a more intelligible doctrine; but theirs also is a surprising  
mistake, for they contend that this is a happy life which is beset by these evils, even though they be  
so great that he who endures them should commit suicide to escape them. Pains and anguish of  
body, says Varro, are evils, and so much the worse in proportion to their severity; and to escape them  
30 you must quit this life. What life, I pray? This life, he says, which is oppressed by such evils. Then it  
is happy in the midst of these very evils on account of which you say we must quit it? Or do you call  
it happy because you are at liberty to escape these evils by death? What, then, if by some secret

1 judgment of God you were held fast and not permitted to die, nor suffered to live without these evils? In that case, at least, you would say that such a life was miserable. It is soon relinquished, no doubt but this does not make it not miserable; for were it eternal, you yourself would pronounce it miserable. Its brevity, therefore, does not clear it of misery; neither ought it to be called happiness because it is a brief misery.

5 Certainly there is a mighty force in these evils which compel a man— according to them even a wise man— to cease to be a man that he may escape them, though they say, and say truly, that it is as it were the first and strongest demand of nature that a man cherish himself, and naturally therefore avoid death, and should so stand his own friend as to wish and vehemently aim at continuing to exist as a living creature, and subsisting in this union of soul and body. There is a mighty force in these evils to overcome this natural instinct by which death is by every means and with all a man's efforts avoided, and to overcome it so completely that what was avoided is desired, sought after, and  
10 if it cannot in any other way be obtained, is inflicted by the man on himself. There is a mighty force in these evils which make fortitude a homicide,— if, indeed, that is to be called fortitude which is so thoroughly overcome by these evils, that it not only cannot preserve by patience the man whom it undertook to govern and defend, but is itself obliged to kill him.

The wise man, I admit, ought to bear death with patience, but when it is inflicted by another. If, then, as these men maintain, he is obliged to inflict it on himself, certainly it must be owned that the  
15 ills which compel him to this are not only evils, but intolerable evils. The life, then, which is either subject to accidents, or environed with evils so considerable and grievous, could never have been called happy, if the men who give it this name had condescended to yield to the truth, and to be conquered by valid arguments, when they inquired after the happy life, as they yield to unhappiness, and are overcome by overwhelming evils, when they put themselves to death, and if they had not fancied that the supreme good was to be found in this mortal life; for the very virtues of this life, which are certainly its best and most useful possessions, are all the more telling proofs of its miseries  
20 in proportion as they are helpful against the violence of its dangers, toils, and woes.

For if these are true virtues—and such cannot exist save in those who have true piety—they do not profess to be able to deliver the men who possess them from all miseries; for true virtues tell no such lies, but they profess that by the hope of the future world this life, which is miserably involved in the many and great evils of this world, is happy as it is also safe. For if not yet safe, how could it be happy? And therefore the Apostle Paul, speaking not of men without prudence, temperance,  
25 fortitude, and justice, but of those whose lives were regulated by true piety, and whose virtues were therefore true, says, For we are saved by hope: now hope which is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:24) As, therefore, we are saved, so we are made happy by hope. And as we do not as yet possess a present, but look for a future salvation, so is it with our happiness, and this with patience; for we are encompassed with evils, which we ought patiently to endure, until we come to the ineffable enjoyment of unmixed good; for there shall be no longer anything to endure. Salvation, such as it shall be in the world to come, shall itself be our final happiness. And this happiness these  
30 philosophers refuse to believe in, because they do not see it, and attempt to fabricate for themselves a happiness in this life, based upon a virtue which is as deceitful as it is proud.

## Chapter 5.— Of the Social Life, Which, Though Most Desirable, is Frequently Disturbed by Many Distresses.

We give a much more unlimited approval to their idea that the life of the wise man must be social. For how could the city of God (concerning which we are already writing no less than the nineteenth book of this work) either take a beginning or be developed, or attain its proper destiny, if the life of the saints were not a social life? But who can enumerate all the great grievances with which human society abounds in the misery of this mortal state? Who can weigh them? Hear how one of their comic writers makes one of his characters express the common feelings of all men in this matter: I am married; this is one misery. Children are born to me; they are additional cares. What shall I say of the miseries of love which Terence also recounts— slights, suspicions, quarrels, war today, peace tomorrow? Is not human life full of such things? Do they not often occur even in honorable friendships? On all hands we experience these slights, suspicions, quarrels, war, all of which are undoubted evils; while, on the other hand, peace is a doubtful good, because we do not know the heart of our friend, and though we did know it today, we should be as ignorant of what it might be tomorrow.

Who ought to be, or who are more friendly than those who live in the same family? And yet who can rely even upon this friendship, seeing that secret treachery has often broken it up, and produced enmity as bitter as the amity was sweet, or seemed sweet by the most perfect dissimulation? It is on this account that the words of Cicero so move the heart of every one, and provoke a sigh: There are no snares more dangerous than those which lurk under the guise of duty or the name of relationship. For the man who is your declared foe you can easily baffle by precaution; but this hidden, intestine, and domestic danger not merely exists, but overwhelms you before you can foresee and examine it. It is also to this that allusion is made by the divine saying, A man's foes are those of his own household, (Matthew 10:36) — words which one cannot hear without pain; for though a man have sufficient fortitude to endure it with equanimity, and sufficient sagacity to baffle the malice of a pretended friend, yet if he himself is a good man, he cannot but be greatly pained at the discovery of the perfidy of wicked men, whether they have always been wicked and merely feigned goodness, or have fallen from a better to a malicious disposition. If, then, home, the natural refuge from the ills of life, is itself not safe, what shall we say of the city, which, as it is larger, is so much the more filled with lawsuits civil and criminal, and is never free from the fear, if sometimes from the actual outbreak, of disturbing and bloody insurrections and civil wars?

## Chapter 6.— Of the Error of Human Judgments When the Truth is Hidden.

What shall I say of these judgments which men pronounce on men, and which are necessary in communities, whatever outward peace they enjoy? Melancholy and lamentable judgments they are, since the judges are men who cannot discern the consciences of those at their bar, and are therefore frequently compelled to put innocent witnesses to the torture to ascertain the truth regarding the crimes of other men. What shall I say of torture applied to the accused himself? He is tortured to discover whether he is guilty, so that, though innocent, he suffers most undoubted punishment for crime that is still doubtful, not because it is proved that he committed it, but because it is not ascertained that he did not commit it.

Thus the ignorance of the judge frequently involves an innocent person in suffering. And what is still more unendurable— a thing, indeed, to be bewailed, and, if that were possible, watered with fountains of tears— is this, that when the judge puts the accused to the question, that he may not unwittingly put an innocent man to death, the result of this lamentable ignorance is that this very person, whom he tortured that he might not condemn him if innocent, is condemned to death both tortured and innocent. For if he has chosen, in obedience to the philosophical instructions to the wise man, to quit this life rather than endure any longer such tortures, he declares that he has committed the crime which in fact he has not committed. And when he has been condemned and put to death, the judge is still in ignorance whether he has put to death an innocent or a guilty person, though he put the accused to the torture for the very purpose of saving himself from condemning the innocent; and consequently he has both tortured an innocent man to discover his innocence, and has put him to death without discovering it. If such darkness shrouds social life, will a wise judge take his seat on the bench or no? Beyond question he will.

For human society, which he thinks it a wickedness to abandon, constrains him and compels him to this duty. And he thinks it no wickedness that innocent witnesses are tortured regarding the crimes of which other men are accused; or that the accused are put to the torture, so that they are often overcome with anguish, and, though innocent, make false confessions regarding themselves, and are punished; or that, though they be not condemned to die, they often die during, or in consequence of, the torture; or that sometimes the accusers, who perhaps have been prompted by a desire to benefit society by bringing criminals to justice, are themselves condemned through the ignorance of the judge, because they are unable to prove the truth of their accusations though they are true, and because the witnesses lie, and the accused endures the torture without being moved to confession. These numerous and important evils he does not consider sins; for the wise judge does these things, not with any intention of doing harm, but because his ignorance compels him, and because human society claims him as a judge. But though we therefore acquit the judge of malice, we must none the less condemn human life as miserable. And if he is compelled to torture and punish the innocent because his office and his ignorance constrain him, is he a happy as well as a guiltless man? Surely it were proof of more profound considerateness and finer feeling were he to recognize the misery of these necessities, and shrink from his own implication in that misery; and had he any piety about him, he would cry to God From my necessities deliver me.

1 **Chapter 7.— Of the Diversity of Languages, by Which the Intercourse of Men is Prevented; And of the Misery of Wars, Even of Those Called Just.**

5 After the state or city comes the world, the third circle of human society, the first being the house, and the second the city. And the world, as it is larger, so it is fuller of dangers, as the greater sea is the more dangerous. And here, in the first place, man is separated from man by the difference of languages. For if two men, each ignorant of the other's language, meet, and are not compelled to pass, but, on the contrary, to remain in company, dumb animals, though of different species, would more easily hold intercourse than they, human beings though they be. For their common nature is no help to friendliness when they are prevented by diversity of language from conveying their  
10 sentiments to one another; so that a man would more readily hold intercourse with his dog than with a foreigner. But the imperial city has endeavored to impose on subject nations not only her yoke, but her language, as a bond of peace, so that interpreters, far from being scarce, are numberless.

This is true; but how many great wars, how much slaughter and bloodshed, have provided this unity! And though these are past, the end of these miseries has not yet come. For though there have never  
15 been wanting, nor are yet wanting, hostile nations beyond the empire, against whom wars have been and are waged, yet, supposing there were no such nations, the very extent of the empire itself has produced wars of a more obnoxious description— social and civil wars— and with these the whole race has been agitated, either by the actual conflict or the fear of a renewed outbreak. If I attempted to give an adequate description of these manifold disasters, these stern and lasting necessities, though I am quite unequal to the task, what limit could I set? But, say they, the wise man will wage just wars. As if he would not all the rather lament the necessity of just wars, if he remembers that he is a  
20 man; for if they were not just he would not wage them, and would therefore be delivered from all wars. For it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars; and this wrong-doing, even though it gave rise to no war, would still be matter of grief to man because it is man's wrong-doing. Let everyone, then, who thinks with pain on all these great evils, so horrible, so ruthless, acknowledge that this is misery. And if any one either endures or thinks of them without mental pain, this is a more miserable plight still, for he thinks himself happy because he has lost human feeling.

## Chapter 8.— That the Friendship of Good Men Cannot Be Securely Rested In, So Long as the Dangers of This Life Force Us to Be Anxious.

In our present wretched condition we frequently mistake a friend for an enemy, and an enemy for a friend. And if we escape this pitiable blindness, is not the unfeigned confidence and mutual love of true and good friends our one solace in human society, filled as it is with misunderstandings and calamities? And yet the more friends we have, and the more widely they are scattered, the more numerous are our fears that some portion of the vast masses of the disasters of life may light upon them. For we are not only anxious lest they suffer from famine, war, disease, captivity, or the inconceivable horrors of slavery, but we are also affected with the much more painful dread that their friendship may be changed into perfidy, malice, and injustice. And when these contingencies actually occur—as they do the more frequently the more friends we have, and the more widely they are scattered—and when they come to our knowledge, who but the man who has experienced it can tell with what pangs the heart is torn?

We would, in fact, prefer to hear that they were dead, although we could not without anguish hear of even this. For if their life has solaced us with the charms of friendship, can it be that their death should affect us with no sadness? He who will have none of this sadness must, if possible, have no friendly intercourse. Let him interdict or extinguish friendly affection; let him burst with ruthless insensibility the bonds of every human relationship; or let him contrive so to use them that no sweetness shall distil into his spirit. But if this is utterly impossible, how shall we contrive to feel no bitterness in the death of those whose life has been sweet to us? Hence arises that grief which affects the tender heart like a wound or a bruise, and which is healed by the application of kindly consolation. For though the cure is affected all the more easily and rapidly the better condition the soul is in, we must not on this account suppose that there is nothing at all to heal. Although, then, our present life is afflicted, sometimes in a milder, sometimes in a more painful degree, by the death of those very dear to us, and especially of useful public men, yet we would prefer to hear that such men were dead rather than to hear or perceive that they had fallen from the faith, or from virtue—in other words, that they were spiritually dead.

Of this vast material for misery the earth is full, and therefore it is written, is not human life upon earth a trial? (Job 7:1) And with the same reference the Lord says, Woe to the world because of offenses! (Matthew 17:7) and again, because iniquity abounded, the love of many shall wax cold. (Matthew 24:12) And hence we enjoy some gratification when our good friends die; for though their death leaves us in sorrow, we have the consolatory assurance that they are beyond the ills by which in this life even the best of men are broken down or corrupted, or are in danger of both results.

...

## Chapter 11.— Of the Happiness of the Eternal Peace, Which Constitutes the End or True Perfection of the Saints.

And thus we may say of peace, as we have said of eternal life, that it is the end of our good; and the rather because the Psalmist says of the city of God, the subject of this laborious work, Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion: for He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you; who has made your borders peace. For when the bars of her gates shall be strengthened, none shall go in or come out from her; consequently we ought to understand the peace of her borders as that final peace we are wishing to declare. For even the mystical name of the city itself, that is, Jerusalem means, as I have already said, Vision of Peace. But as the word peace is employed in connection with things in this world in which certainly life eternal has no place, we have preferred to call the end or supreme good of this city life eternal rather than peace. Of this end the apostle says, but now, being freed from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end life eternal. (Romans 6:22)

But, on the other hand, as those who are not familiar with Scripture may suppose that the life of the wicked is eternal life, either because of the immortality of the soul, which some of the philosophers even have recognized, or because of the endless punishment of the wicked, which forms a part of our faith, and which seems impossible unless the wicked live forever, it may therefore be advisable, in order that every one may readily understand what we mean, to say that the end or supreme good of this city is either peace in eternal life, or eternal life in peace. For peace is a good so great, that even in this earthly and mortal life there is no word we hear with such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more thoroughly gratifying. So that if we dwell for a little longer on this subject, we shall not, in my opinion, be wearisome to our readers, who will attend both for the sake of understanding what is the end of this city of which we speak, and for the sake of the sweetness of peace which is dear to all.

...

## Chapter 13.— Of the Universal Peace Which the Law of Nature Preserves Through All Disturbances, and by Which Every One Reaches His Desert in a Way Regulated by the Just Judge.

The peace of the body then consists in the duly proportioned arrangement of its parts. The peace of the irrational soul is the harmonious repose of the appetites, and that of the rational soul the harmony of knowledge and action. The peace of body and soul is the well-ordered and harmonious life and health of the living creature. Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord. Domestic peace is the well-ordered concord between those of the family who rule and those who obey. Civil peace is a

1 similar concord among the citizens. The peace of the celestial city is the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God. The peace of all things is the tranquility of order.

Order is the distribution which allots things equal and unequal, each to its own place. And hence, though the miserable, in so far as they are such, do certainly not enjoy peace, but are severed from that tranquility of order in which there is no disturbance, nevertheless, inasmuch as they are deservedly and justly miserable, they are by their very misery connected with order. They are not, indeed, conjoined with the blessed, but they are disjoined from them by the law of order. And though they are disquieted, their circumstances are notwithstanding adjusted to them, and consequently they have some tranquility of order, and therefore some peace. But they are wretched because, although not wholly miserable, they are not in that place where any mixture of misery is impossible. They would, however, be more wretched if they had not that peace which arises from being in harmony with the natural order of things.

When they suffer, their peace is in so far disturbed; but their peace continues in so far as they do not suffer, and in so far as their nature continues to exist. As, then, there may be life without pain, while there cannot be pain without some kind of life, so there may be peace without war, but there cannot be war without some kind of peace, because war supposes the existence of some natures to wage it, and these natures cannot exist without peace of one kind or other.

And therefore there is a nature in which evil does not or even cannot exist; but there cannot be a nature in which there is no good. Hence not even the nature of the devil himself is evil, in so far as it is nature, but it was made evil by being perverted. Thus he did not abide in the truth, John 8:44 but could not escape the judgment of the Truth; he did not abide in the tranquility of order, but did not therefore escape the power of the Ordainer. The good imparted by God to his nature did not screen him from the justice of God by which order was preserved in his punishment; neither did God punish the good which He had created, but the evil which the devil had committed. God did not take back all He had imparted to his nature, but something He took and something He left, that there might remain enough to be sensible of the loss of what was taken. And this very sensibility to pain is evidence of the good which has been taken away and the good which has been left.

For, were nothing good left, there could be no pain on account of the good which had been lost. For he who sins is still worse if he rejoices in his loss of righteousness, but he who is in pain, if he derives no benefit from it, mourns at least the loss of health. And as righteousness and health are both good things, and as the loss of any good thing is matter of grief, not of joy—if, at least, there is no compensation, as spiritual righteousness may compensate for the loss of bodily health—certainly it is more suitable for a wicked man to grieve in punishment than to rejoice in his fault. As, then, the joy of a sinner who has abandoned what is good is evidence of a bad will, so his grief for the good he has lost when he is punished is evidence of a good nature. For he who laments the peace his nature has lost is stirred to do so by some relics of peace which make his nature friendly to itself. And it is very just that in the final punishment the wicked and godless should in anguish bewail the loss of the natural advantages they enjoyed, and should perceive that they were most justly taken from them by that God whose benign liberality they had despised.

1 God, then, the most wise Creator and most just Ordainer of all natures, who placed the human race upon earth as its greatest ornament, imparted to men some good things adapted to this life, to wit, temporal peace, such as we can enjoy in this life from health and safety and human fellowship, and all things needful for the preservation and recovery of this peace, such as the objects which are accommodated to our outward senses, light, night, the air, and waters suitable for us, and everything the body requires to sustain, shelter, heal, or beautify it: and all under this most equitable condition,  
5 that every man who made a good use of these advantages suited to the peace of this mortal condition, should receive ampler and better blessings, namely, the peace of immortality, accompanied by glory and honor in an endless life made fit for the enjoyment of God and of one another in God; but that he who used the present blessings badly should both lose them and should not receive the others.

...

10

## **Chapter 27.— That the Peace of Those Who Serve God Cannot in This Mortal Life Be Apprehended in Its Perfection.**

15 But the peace which is peculiar to ourselves we enjoy now with God by faith, and shall hereafter enjoy eternally with Him by sight. But the peace which we enjoy in this life, whether common to all or peculiar to ourselves is rather the solace of our misery than the positive enjoyment of felicity. Our very righteousness, too, though true in so far as it has respect to the true good, is yet in this life of such a kind that it consists rather in the remission of sins than in the perfecting of virtues. Witness the prayer of the whole city of God in its pilgrim state, for it cries to God by the mouth of all its members, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. (Matthew 6:12) And this prayer is  
20 efficacious not for those whose faith is without works and dead, (James 2:17) but for those whose faith works by love. (Galatians 5:6) For as reason, though subjected to God, is yet pressed down by the corruptible body, (Wisdom 9:15) so long as it is in this mortal condition, it has not perfect authority over vice, and therefore this prayer is needed by the righteous.

For though it exercises authority, the vices do not submit without a struggle, for however well one maintains the conflict, and however thoroughly he has subdued these enemies, there steals in some  
25 evil thing, which, if it does not find ready expression in act, slips out by the lips, or insinuates itself into the thought; and therefore his peace is not full so long as he is at war with his vices. For it is a doubtful conflict he wages with those that resist, and his victory over those that are defeated is not secure, but full of anxiety and effort. Amidst these temptations, therefore, of all which it has been summarily said in the divine oracles, is not human life upon earth a temptation? (Job 7:1) who but a  
proud man can presume that he so lives that he has no need to say to God, Forgive us our debts? And such a man is not great, but swollen and puffed up with vanity, and is justly resisted by Him  
30 who abundantly gives grace to the humble.

Whence it is said, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. In this, then, consists the righteousness of a man, that he submit himself to God, his body to his soul, and his vices, even when

1 they rebel, to his reason, which either defeats or at least resists them; and also that he beg from God  
grace to do his duty, and the pardon of his sins, and that he render to God thanks for all the  
blessings he receives. But, in that final peace to which all our righteousness has reference, and for the  
sake of which it is maintained, as our nature shall enjoy a sound immortality and incorruption, and  
shall have no more vices, and as we shall experience no resistance either from ourselves or from  
5 the man, and the soul shall rule the body, with a sweetness and facility suitable to the felicity of a life  
which is done with bondage. And this condition shall there be eternal, and we shall be assured of its  
eternity; and thus the peace of this blessedness and the blessedness of this peace shall be the supreme  
good.