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In memory of
Matthew John Purvis
1986–1993
now, though rather by future hope than in present reality. Present reality without that hope, however, is a false happiness and a great misery, since, in that case, the true goods of the soul are not enjoyed. For no wisdom is true wisdom if it does not direct all its prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice towards that final state where God shall be all in all in an assured eternity and perfect peace.

21 Whether there ever was a Roman commonwealth answering to the definitions proposed by Scipio in Cicero’s dialogue

I come now, then, to the place where, as I promised in the second book of this work,45 I shall demonstrate that, according to the definitions proposed by Scipio in Cicero’s book De republica, there never was a Roman commonwealth. I shall do this as briefly and as clearly as I can.

Scipio briefly defines a commonwealth as ‘the property of a people’. If this is a true definition, however, there never was a Roman commonwealth, for the Roman state was never ‘the property of a people’ which the definition requires a commonwealth to be. Scipio defined a ‘people’ as a multitude ‘united in fellowship by common agreement as to what is right and by a community of interest’. In the course of the discussion, he explains what he means by ‘common agreement as to what is right’, showing that a commonwealth cannot be maintained without justice. Where, therefore, there is no true justice there can be no right. For that which is done according to right is inevitably a just act, whereas nothing that is done unjustly can be done according to right. But the unjust institutions of men are neither to be called right nor supposed to be such; for even men themselves say that ‘right’ [ius] is that which flows from the fount of justice [iustitia]. As for the definition of justice commonly offered by certain persons who do not understand the matter rightly, that it is ‘the interest of the stronger’: this is false.46 Where there is no true justice, then, there can be no association of men ‘united in fellowship by common agreement as to what is right’, and therefore no people according to the definition of Scipio or Cicero. And if there is no people then there is no ‘property of a people’, but only a multitude of some kind, not worthy of the name of a people. If, therefore, a commonwealth is ‘the property of a people’, and if there is no ‘people’ where there is no ‘common agreement as to what is right’, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then it follows beyond doubt that where there is no justice there is no commonwealth. Moreover, justice is that virtue which gives to each his due.47 What kind of justice is it, then, that takes a man away from the true God and subjects him to impure demons? Is this giving to each his due? Or are we to call a man unjust if he takes a piece of property away from one who has bought it and hands it over to someone who has no right to it, yet just if he takes himself away from the lordship of the God who made him, and serves evil spirits?

In this same book, De repubica, a most vigorous and forceful argument is developed on behalf of justice against injustice. Earlier in the discussion a case was made out in favour of injustice and against justice, and it was stated that a commonwealth cannot stand or be governed except by injustice. For it was proposed as a quite incontrovertible point here that it is unjust for some men to rule and others to serve; yet an imperial city to which a great commonwealth belongs cannot govern her provinces other than by means of such injustice. On the side of justice, it was urged in reply that this state of affairs is, in fact, just, because servitude may be to the advantage of such men as the provincials are, and is indeed so when rightly established: that is, when dishonest men are deprived of their freedom to do wrong. It was also urged that subjugated peoples will in any case be better off, because they were worse off when they were not subjeguated. To strengthen this reasoning, there is added a notable example taken from nature. ‘Why’, it is asked, ‘does God rule man, the soul the body, and the reason the desires and other vicious parts of the soul?’ By this example it is shown plainly enough that servitude is beneficial for some men, and that servitude to God is indeed beneficial for all. For, when it serves God, the soul rules the body rightly; and, in the soul itself, when the reason is subject to God as its Lord, it rightly governs the

45 Cf. Bk ii,21.
The City of God against the pagans

desires and other such things. That being so, however, what justice
can we suppose there to be in a man who does not serve God? For
if the soul does not serve God it cannot by any means govern the
body justly, nor can human reason govern the vices. And if there is
no justice in such a man, then it is beyond doubt that there is no
justice in a collection of men consisting of persons of this kind.
Here, then, there is not that 'common agreement as to what is right'
by which a multitude is made into a 'people' whose 'property' a
commonwealth is said to be. And why need I say anything of that
'community of interest' which, according to our definition, makes a
gathering of men into a 'people'? For if you attend diligently to the
matter, you will see for yourself that nothing is 'in the interest' of
those who live godlessly - of those, that is, who serve not God, but
demons: demons whose impiety is all the greater in that they desire
to have sacrifices offered to them as if they were gods rather than
most unclean spirits. For my part, I consider that what I have
already said concerning a 'common agreement as to what is right'
is enough to make it apparent that, by this definition, there can be
no 'people', and therefore no 'property' called a commonwealth,
where there is no justice.

But perhaps our adversaries will say that the Romans did not
serve unclean spirits in their commonwealth, but good and holy
gods. Must we, then, repeat yet again those things which we have
already said often enough, and more than often enough? Must not
anyone who has perused the earlier books of this work down to this
point be either exceedingly stupid or shamelessly contentious if he
still doubts that the Romans served evil and impure demons? But,
to say no more of the kind of gods whom the Romans worshipped
with sacrifice, it is written in the Law of the true God, 'He that
sacrificeth unto any god save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly
destroyed.'

He Who uttered so great a threat does not desire that
we should sacrifice either to good or bad gods.

22 Whether the God Whom Christians serve is the
true God to Whom alone sacrifice is due

But the following reply is possible: 'Who is this God, and what
proof is there that He is the only one Whom the Romans should
have obeyed, and that they should have worshipped and sacrificed
to no god save Him?' Anyone who is even now asking Who this
God is must be very blind. He is the same God Whose prophets
foretold the events that we now see accomplished. He is the God
from Whom Abraham received the promise, 'In thy seed shall all
nations be blessed.' And this promise has been fulfilled in Christ,
Who sprang from Abraham's seed according to the flesh. Even those
who have remained hostile to the name of Christ acknowledge this,
whether they wish to or not. He is the God Whose divine Spirit
spoke through those whose prophecies I have cited in earlier books:
prophecies which have been fulfilled in the Church which we now
see spread throughout the whole world. He is the God Whom Varro,
the most learned of the Romans, supposed to be Jupiter. Varro
did not understand what he was saying; but, nonetheless, I
have considered it worthwhile to note the fact that a man of such
great learning did not think this God to be non-existent or insigni-
ficant, but believed Him to be the same as the supreme god. Finally,
He is the God whom Porphyry, the most learned of philosophers -
though the bitterest enemy of the Christians - acknowledges to be
a great god, even according to the oracles of those whom he sup-
poses to be gods.

23 Porphyry's account of the answers given by the
oracles of the gods concerning Christ

For in his book called Philosophy from the Oracles - a work in
which he collects and comments on what he takes to be divine
answers to philosophical questions - Porphyry speaks as follows (I
give his own words, though translated into Latin from the Greek).
'To one who asked what god he should appease in order to recall
his wife from Christianity, Apollo gave the following reply in verse.'
Then come the following words, supposedly those of Apollo him-
self:

.. Exod. 22,20.
.. Gen. 22,18.
so Cf. Augustine, De concens. evang., 1,30,22.
51 Cf. Eusebius, Praep. evang., 4,6,21; 4,8,3. The surviving fragments of this work
have been edited by John O'Meara as Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles (London,
1959).
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You will, perhaps, be more able to write enduring letters on water, or open light wings and fly through the air like a bird, than bring your defiled and impious wife back to her senses. Let her continue as she likes, persevering in her vain delusions, singing lamentations for a god who died deluded himself: a god who was condemned by righteous judges and sentenced to die cruelly by the worst of deaths.

Then, after those verses of Apollo (although the Latin translation of them does not preserve the metrical form), Porphyry goes on: 'In these words, Apollo made clear the incorrigibility of the belief of the Christians, saying that the Jews are more ready to recognise God than the Christians are.' See how he denigrates Christ when he gives preference to the Jews over the Christians, saying that it is the Jews who defend God? For he expounds the verses of Apollo, where Apollo says that Christ was condemned to death by righteous judges, as if these verses meant that the judges were just in their judgment and that Christ deserved His punishment. But as to what this lying oracle of Apollo said, and Porphyry believed – an oracle which Porphyry perhaps invented himself: let us leave it aside. We shall see presently how consistent Porphyry is with himself, or, rather, how far he makes those oracles of his agree with one another.

Here, at any rate, he says that the Jews, as defenders of God, rightly gave judgment against Christ in pronouncing Him worthy to be tormented by the worst kind of death. Porphyry, therefore, bears witness to the God of the Jews; in which case, however, he ought to have listened to Him when He said, 'He that sacrificeth unto any god shall be utterly destroyed.'

Despite that insult of his which we have just spoken, however, this philosopher also has some good things to say of Christ. It is as if his gods spoke ill of Christ when asleep, yet acknowledged Him to be good, and gave Him due praise, when they awoke. For, as if he were intending to declare some wonderful and incredible thing, he says,

What we are about to say will certainly seem beyond belief to some. For the gods have declared that Christ was exceedingly pious, and that He has become an immortal, and that they speak well of His memory. But they also say that the Christians are defiled, contaminated and implicated in error. And many other such things do the gods say in accusation against the Christians.

Thus Hecate said that Christ was a most pious man, and that his soul, like those of other pious men, was granted immortality after death; and that Christians in their ignorance worship it. Moreover, to those who asked, 'Why, therefore, was Christ condemned?', the goddess gave the following oracular response: 'The body, indeed, is always liable to torments that undermine it; whereas the souls of the pious abide in a heavenly dwelling-place. But the soul of Christ has been a fatal gift to other souls, which were not destined to possess the gifts of the gods or to have knowledge of immortal Jupiter: a gift involving them in error. That is why the Christians are hated by the gods: because, not being fated to know God or to receive the gifts of the gods, they were fatally implicated in error by this man’s gift. He himself, however, was pious; and, like other pious men,
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passed into heaven. And so you should not speak ill of him, but, rather, pity the madness of men. From him comes for them a ready and imminent peril.'

Who, then, is so stupid as not to understand that these oracles were either the inventions of a devious man, a most determined enemy of the Christians, or the responses of impure demons, devised with similar intent? The intention of such demons here, clearly, is to lend credence to their vituperation of the Christians by first praising Christ, thereby, if possible, closing off the way of everlasting salvation whereby we become Christians. They clearly consider that it is not contrary to their astute and manifold efforts to do harm if they are believed when they praise Christ, provided that their vituperation of the Christians is also believed. For, then, if a man believes both, he may be an admirer of Christ without also wishing to become a Christian; and so Christ, though praised by him, will not deliver him from the dominion of those demons. Moreover, their praise of Christ is in any case such that whoever believes in the kind of Christ proclaimed by them becomes not a true Christian, but a heretic like Photinus: one who acknowledges Christ only as a man, not as God also. Therefore, such a man cannot be saved by Him, and cannot avoid or unloose the snares of those lying demons.

For our part, we cannot approve either Apollo's vituperation of Christ or Hecate's praise of Him. For Apollo wishes it to be believed that Christ was sentenced to death by righteous judges, as a wicked man. Hecate, on the other hand, says that He was a most pious man, but only a man. In both cases, however, the intention is the same: to lead men to refuse to become Christians. For, unless they become Christians, they cannot be rescued from the power of the demons.

But our philosopher, or rather all those who believe such purported oracles against the Christians, must first, if they can, bring Hecate and Apollo into agreement regarding Christ, so that both may join together in either condemning or praising Him. Even if they were able to do this, however, we should none the less shun the testimony of false demons, whether they insult Christ or praise Him. But, as it happens, our adversaries' own god and goddess

very small earthly spirits, subject to the power of evil demons. The wise men of the Hebrews (of whom this Jesus was one, as you have heard from the oracles of Apollo, of which we have already spoken) warned religious men against these evil demons and lesser spirits, and forbade them to give heed to them, teaching them rather to venerate the celestial gods and, above all, to worship God the Father. But the gods also teach this; and we have shown above how they admonish us to turn our minds to God, and everywhere command us worship Him. Uninstructed and impious natures, however, to which fate has not granted the gifts of the gods and the knowledge of immortal Jupiter, have not listened to the gods and to divinely inspired men; and so they have rejected all the gods, while, far from hating the forbidden demons, they revere them. Feigning to worship God, they fail to do those things by which alone God is adored. For God, indeed, Who is the Father of all, has no need of anything; but it is good for us to adore Him by means of justice, chastity, and the other virtues, and to make our whole life a prayer to Him by imitating Him and seeking to know Him. For seeking to know Him purges us, while imitation of Him defiles us by causing our disposition to resemble His.

Porphry certainly spoke well in proclaiming God the Father and in telling of the conduct by which He is to be worshipped; and the prophetic books of the Hebrews are full of such precepts, whereby the life of holy men is enjoined upon us or praised. But Porphry's errors or calumnies in speaking of the Christians are as great as...
those demons whom he supposes to be gods could wish for. It is not, after all, difficult for anyone to recall the obscenities and indecencies which were acted out in the theatres at their behest, and to compare these things with what is read, spoken and heard in our churches, or what is offered to the true God. Thus, it is not difficult to understand, from this comparison, where morals are built up and where ruined. Who but a diabolic spirit could have told Porphyry, or inspired him to tell, such a vain and obvious lie as that the Christians revere, instead of hating, the demons whose worship was forbidden to the Hebrews? For that God Whom the wise men of the Hebrews worshiped forbids the offering of sacrifice even to the holy angels and powers of God: even to those angels and powers whom we venerate and love as our most blessed fellow citizens during this our mortal pilgrimage. For, in a voice of thunder, He utters this threat in His Law, which He gave to His Hebrew people, saying, ‘He that sacrificeth unto any god shall be utterly destroyed.’ Someone might suppose, however, that this prohibition applies only to the worst of the demons and to those earthly spirits which Porphyry says are very small or minor. For even these are called ‘gods’ in the Sacred Scriptures: gods of the Gentiles, that is, not of the Hebrews; and this is clear from the Septuagint translation of one of the psalms, where it says, ‘For all the gods of the nations are demons.’ Someone might suppose, then, that, even though it is forbidden to sacrifice to these demons, it is permitted to offer sacrifice to all or some of the heavenly beings. And this is why the words ‘save unto the Lord only’ are added at once: that is ‘save unto the Lord alone.’ (I say this lest anyone should believe that ‘unto the Lord only’ [Domino soli] means that sacrifice is to be offered to ‘our Lord the Sun’ [Dominum solem]. That this is not what is meant can be seen very easily from the Greek version of the Scriptures.)

The God of the Hebrews, then, to whom this distinguished philosopher bears such testimony, gave to his Hebrew people the Law, written in the Hebrew language: a Law not obscure and unknown, but now spread abroad among all the nations. And in this Law it is written: ‘He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed.’ What need is there to seek any further proofs of this same thing, either in the Law or the prophets? There is, indeed, no need for any enquiry at all, for the proofs are neither difficult nor scarce. What need is there, then, to collect and insert into this discussion of mine proofs which are so plain and abundant: proofs by which it is made luminously clear that the true and supreme God has willed that sacrifice should be offered to no other being whatsoever, but to Himself alone? Behold one such proof, brief but magnificent, threatening, but certainly a true utterance of that God Whom the most learned of our adversaries so excellently proclaim. Let this warning be heard, feared, and obeyed, lest the disobedient be utterly destroyed in consequence. ‘He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only’, He says, ‘shall be utterly destroyed’. This is not because God has need of anything, but because it is to our advantage to be His. For it is to Him that the psalmist sings, in the holy Scriptures of the Hebrews, ‘I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou needest not my good.’ Yet it is we ourselves, His own City, who are His most wonderful and best sacrifice. And, as the faithful know, and as we have explained in previous books, we celebrate the mystery of this sacrifice in our offerings. For it was proclaimed by divine oracles through the holy prophets that the sacrificial victims which the Jews offered as a foreshadowing of what was to come should cease, and that all nations, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, were to offer one sacrifice; and now we see that these things have come to pass. I have, however, already selected as many of these oracles as seemed sufficient, and distributed them throughout this work.

Thus, justice is found where the one supreme God rules an obedient City according to His grace, so that it sacrifices to none but Him; and where, in consequence, the soul rules the body in all men who belong to that City and obey God, and the reason faithfully rules the vices in lawful order. In that City, both the individual just man and the community and people of the just live by faith, which works by love; by that love with which a man loves God as God ought to be loved, and his neighbour as himself. But where
there is not this justice, there certainly is no association of men united by a common agreement as to what is right and by a community of interest. And so there is no commonwealth; for where there is no ‘people’, there is no ‘property of a people’.

24 What is the definition which must be given of a ‘people’ and a ‘commonwealth’ in order to show that these titles may be claimed not only by the Roman but by other kingdoms also

But let us disregard this definition of a people and adopt another: let us say that a ‘people’ is an assembled multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to what it loves. If it is an assembled multitude, not of animals but of rational creatures, and is united by a common agreement as to what it loves, then it is not absurd to call it a ‘people’, no matter what the objects of its love may be. Clearly, however, the better the objects of this agreement, the better the people; and the worse the objects, the worse the people.

According to this definition of ours, the Roman people is indeed a people, and its ‘property’ is without doubt a commonwealth. As to the objects of that people’s love — both in the earliest days and in the times which followed — and the morals of that people as it fell into bloody seditions and thence into social and civil wars, and so ruptured or corrupted that bond of concord which is, as it were, the health of a people: we have the testimony of history for all this, and I have presented many illustrations in the preceding books. I do not, however, on this account say that the Roman people was not really a people, or that Rome was not a commonwealth, so long as there remains an association of some kind between a multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love. It must be understood, however, that what I have said of the Roman people and commonwealth I also say and think of the Athenians and any other Greeks, of the Egyptians, of the ancient Babylon of the Assyrians, and of every other nation, great or small, which has exercised its sway over commonwealths. For the city of the ungodly, considered generally, does not obey God’s command that sacrifice should be offered to none save Him alone. Thus, because the soul cannot in that case rightly and faithfully govern the body, nor the reason the vices, there can be no true justice in that city.

25 That where there is no true religion, there can be no true virtues

It may seem, indeed, that the soul governs the body and the reason the vices in a most praiseworthy fashion; yet, if soul and reason do not themselves serve God as God Himself has taught us that He should be served, they do not in any way govern the body and the vices righteously. For what kind of mistress of the body and the vices can the mind be if it does not know the true God and is not subject to His rule, but is instead prostituted to the corrupting influence of most vicious demons? Thus, the virtues which the mind seems to possess, and by which it governs the body and the vices so that it may obtain and keep whatever it desires, are really themselves vices, and not virtues at all, if they do not have reference to God. Some, indeed, suppose that the virtues are true and honourable even when they have reference only to themselves and are sought for no other end. Then, however, they are puffed up and proud, and so are to be adjudged vices rather than virtues. For just as that which gives life to the flesh is not something derived from the flesh, but something above it, so that which makes the life of man blessed is not something derived from him, but something above him. And this is true not only of man but of every heavenly power and virtue whatsoever.

26 Of the peace which is enjoyed by people who are estranged from God, and the use made of it by the people of God during the time of their pilgrimage

Thus, just as the soul is the life of the flesh, so God is the blessedness of man’s life. As the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrews say, ‘Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.’ A people estranged from God, therefore, must be wretched; yet even such a people as

Psalm 144:15.
this loves a peace of its own, which is not to be despised. It will
not, indeed, possess it in the end, because it does not make good
use of it before the end. For the time being, however, it is advan-
tageous to us also that this people should have such peace in this
life; for, while the two cities are intermingled, we also make use of
the peace of Babylon. We do so even though the people of God is
delivered from Babylon by faith, so that it is only for a while that
we are pilgrims in her midst. It is for this reason, therefore, that
the apostle admonishes the Church to pray for kings and for all that
are in authority, adding these words: 'that we may live a quiet and
tranquil life in all godliness and love'.

Again, when the prophet Jeremiah foretold the captivity which was to befall the ancient
People of God, he bade them, by divine command, to go obediently
into Babylon, thereby serving God even by their patient endurance;
and he himself admonished them to pray for Babylon, saying 'In
the peace thereof shall ye have peace': the temporal peace which
is for the time being shared by the good and the wicked alike.

27 That the peace of God's servants cannot be
apprehended in its perfection during this mortal life

That peace which is our peculiar possession, however, is ours even
now, with God by faith, and we shall enjoy it eternally with Him
by sight. But the peace which we have here, whether shared with
other men or peculiar to ourselves, is only a solace for our wretched-
ness rather than the joy of blessedness. Our righteousness also,
though true righteousness insofar as it is directed towards a good
end, is in this life such that it consists only in the remission of sin
rather than in the perfection of virtue. This is borne out by the
prayer of the whole City of God during its pilgrimage on earth; for
it cries out to God with the voice of all its members: 'Forgive us
our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against US.,
but this prayer has efficacy not for those whose faith is 'without works
and deed', but only for those whose faith 'worketh by love'.

Righteous men have need of such a prayer because their reason,
even though subject to God, does not exercise perfect control over
the vices in this mortal state, where it is pressed down by the cor-
ruptible body. For, though it governs the vices, the vices do not
allow themselves to be governed without resistance. No matter how
well a man maintains the conflict, then, and no matter how com-
pletely he masters such enemies by overcoming and subduing them,
some evil thing may still creep in: something which, even if it does
not readily take the form of a deed, nonetheless finds expression
through the lips, or insinuates itself into the thought.

Thus, peace in the full sense does not exist for as long as it is
necessary to govern the vices. For the battle is full of peril while
those vices which resist are being overcome; and even when some of
them are conquered, the result is not a secure triumph, but only
a rule full of anxiety and effort. We dwell, therefore, in the midst
of temptations, of which it has been succinctly said in the divine
elegance, 'Is not human life upon earth a temptation?' Who can
presume that he is living in such a way that he has no need to say
to God, 'Forgive us our trespasses'? No one but an arrogant man
would think such a thing: not a truly great man, but one puffed up
and swollen with pride, who is with justice resisted by Him who
bestows grace upon the humble. For this reason, it is written: 'God
resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.'

In this life, therefore, justice is present in each man when he
obeys God, when the mind rules the body, and when the reason
governs the vices which oppose it, by subduing or resisting them.
Also, it is present when man begs God for the grace to do meritori-
ous deeds, and for pardon for his offences, and when he duly gives
thanks to Him for all the blessings he receives. In that final peace,
however, to which this justice should be referred, and for the attain-
ment of which it is to be maintained, our nature will be healed by
immortality and incorruption. Then, it will have no vices, and
nothing at all, in ourselves or any other, will be in conflict with any
one of us. Thus, there will be no need for reason to govern the
vices, because there will be no vices. Rather, God will rule man,
and the soul will rule the body; and the delight and effortlessness
with which we obey in that final peace will be as great as our happiness in living and reigning. There, for each and every man, this condition will be eternal, and its eternity will be assured; and so the peace of this blessedness, or the blessedness of this peace, will be the Supreme Good.

28 The end of the wicked

By contrast, however, the lot of those who do not belong to the City of God will be everlasting misery. This misery is also called the second death, for the soul cannot be said to be alive when it is in that condition: when it is separated from the life of God; nor can the body be said to be alive when it is subjected to eternal pain. And so this second death will be all the harder to bear, because there will be no other death to bring it to an end.

But just as misery is the opposite of happiness, and death of life, so it seems that the opposite of peace is war. And so it may fairly be asked: If the final state of the good is proclaimed and praised as being one of peace, how, or in what sense, is the final state of the wicked to be understood as being one of war? Anyone who asks this question, then, should pay attention to what it is that is so harmful and destructive in war; and he will see that it is nothing other than the mutual opposition and conflict of things. What war, then, can be imagined more grievous and bitter than one in which the will is so much at odds with the passions, and the passions with the will, that their hostility cannot be ended by the victory of either: a war such that the force of pain is in such conflict with the body's nature that neither can yield to the other? For in this life, when such conflict takes place, either pain conquers, and death takes away feeling, or nature conquers, and health abolishes pain. But in the life to come, pain continues always, in order to torment, while nature remains in order to feel the pain. Neither ceases to exist, lest punishment also should cease. These, then, are the final states of good and evil, the first to be longed for and the second shunned. And since it is through a judgment that the good will pass to the one, and the evil to the other, it is of this judgment that I shall deal, as far as God grants, in following book.

1 God is always judging; but it is reasonable to confine our attention in this book to His last judgment

As far as He will grant me power to do so, I shall now speak of the day of God's final judgment and affirm it against the ungodly and the unbelieving. I must begin by laying down, as the foundation of the building, as it were, the evidence of Divine Scripture. Those who do not wish to believe such evidence endeavour to overturn it by means of a false and fallacious process of human hair-splitting. They either contend that what is put forward as evidence from the Holy Scriptures has some other meaning, or they simply deny that it is divinely inspired. But I believe that no mortal man who understands these statements as they were uttered and believes that they were spoken by the supreme and true God through the agency of holy souls will fail to yield and consent to them, whether he openly acknowledges this or not; although it may be, of course, that he is ashamed or afraid to do so because of some fault. It may even be, indeed, that, with a perversity closely allied to madness, he strives with all his might to defend what he knows or believes to be false against what he knows or believes to be true.

The whole Church of the true God, then, holds and professes the belief that Christ will come down from heaven to judge the living and the dead. This is what we call the last day, the day of the divine judgment: that is, the last time; for it is not certain how many days this judgment will take. But no one who reads the Sacred Scriptures, however negligently, does not know that the word 'day' is often used in them to mean 'time'. Also, when we speak of the day of God's judgment, we add the word 'last' or 'final'; for God is judging even now. He has been judging from the beginning of the human race, when He expelled the first human beings from Paradise and cut them off from the tree of life as perpetrators of a great sin. Indeed, He undoubtedly gave judgment even before that, when He did not spare the