

ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

By Saint Aurelius Augustine

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BOOK THREE

[continues]

Chapter 18 — We Must Take into Consideration the Time at Which Anything Was Enjoyed or Allowed. We must also be on our guard against supposing that what in the Old Testament, making allowance for the condition of those times, is not a crime or a vice even if we take it literally and not figuratively, can be transferred to the present time as a habit of life. For no one will do this except lust has dominion over him, and endeavors to find support for itself in the very Scriptures which were intended to overthrow it. And the wretched man does not perceive that such matters are recorded with this useful design, that men of good hope may learn the salutary lesson, both that the custom they spurn can be turned to a good use, and that which they embrace can be used to condemnation, if the use of the former be accompanied with charity, and the use of the latter with lust. For, if it was possible for one man to use many wives with chastity, it is possible for another to use one wife with lust. And I look with greater approval on the man who uses the fruitfulness of many wives for the sake of an ulterior object, than on the man who enjoys the body of one wife for its own sake. For in the former case the man

aims at a useful object suited to the circumstances of the times; in the latter case he gratifies a lust which is engrossed in temporal enjoyments. And those men to whom the apostle permitted as a matter of indulgence to have one wife because of their incontinence, were less near to God than those who, though they had each of them numerous wives, yet just as a wise man uses food and drink only for the sake of bodily health, used marriage only for the sake of offspring. And, accordingly, if these last had been still alive at the advent of our Lord, when the time not of casting stones away but of gathering them together had come, Ecclesiastes 3:5 they would have immediately made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. For there is no difficulty in abstaining unless when there is lust in enjoying. And assuredly those men of whom I speak knew that wantonness even in regard to wives is abuse and intemperance, as is proved by Tobit's prayer when he was married to his wife. For he says: Blessed are You, O God of our fathers, and blessed is Your holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless You, and all Your creatures. You made Adam, and gave him Eve his wife for an helper and stay. . . . And now, O Lord, You know that I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly: therefore have pity on us, O Lord. Tobit 8:5-7 Chapter 19 — Wicked Men Judge Others by Themselves. But those who, giving the rein to lust, either wander about steeping themselves in a multitude of debaucheries, or even in regard to one wife not only exceed the measure necessary for the procreation of children, but with the shameless licence of a sort of slavish freedom heap up the filth of a still more beastly excess, such men do not believe it possible that the men of ancient times used a number of wives with temperance, looking to nothing but the duty, necessary in the circumstances of the time, of propagating the race; and what they themselves, who are entangled in the meshes of lust, do not accomplish in the case of a single wife, they think utterly impossible in the

case of a number of wives. But these same men might say that it is not right even to honor and praise good and holy men, because they themselves when they are honored and praised, swell with pride, becoming the more eager for the emptiest sort of distinction the more frequently and the more widely they are blown about on the tongue of flattery, and so become so light that a breath of rumor, whether it appear prosperous or adverse, will carry them into the whirlpool of vice or dash them on the rocks of crime. Let them, then, learn how trying and difficult it is for themselves to escape either being caught by the bait of praise, or pierced by the stings of insult; but let them not measure others by their own standard. Chapter 20 — Consistency of Good Men in All Outward Circumstances. Let them believe, on the contrary, that the apostles of our faith were neither puffed up when they were honored by men, nor cast down when they were despised. And certainly neither sort of temptation was wanting to those great men. For they were both cried up by the loud praises of believers, and cried down by the slanderous reports of their persecutors. But the apostles used all these things, as occasion served, and were not corrupted; and in the same way the saints of old used their wives with reference to the necessities of their own times, and were not in bondage to lust as they are who refuse to believe these things. For if they had been under the influence of any such passion, they could never have restrained themselves from implacable hatred towards their sons, by whom they knew that their wives and concubines were solicited and debauched. Chapter 21 — David Not Lustful, Though He Fell into Adultery. But when King David had suffered this injury at the hands of his impious and unnatural son, he not only bore with him in his mad passion, but mourned over him in his death. He certainly was not caught in the meshes of carnal jealousy, seeing that it was not his own injuries but the sins of his son that moved him. For it was on this

account he had given orders that his son should not be slain if he were conquered in battle, that he might have a place of repentance after he was subdued; and when he was baffled in this design, he mourned over his son's death, not because of his own loss, but because he knew to what punishment so impious an adulterer and parricide had been hurried. For prior to this, in the case of another son who had been guilty of no crime, though he was dreadfully afflicted for him while he was sick, yet he comforted himself after his death. 2 Samuel 12:19-23 And with what moderation and self-restraint those men used their wives appears chiefly in this, that when this same king, carried away by the heat of passion and by temporal prosperity, had taken unlawful possession of one woman, whose husband also he ordered to be put to death, he was accused of his crime by a prophet, who, when he had come to show him his sin, set before him the parable of the poor man who had but one ewe-lamb, and whose neighbor, though he had many, yet when a came to him spared to take of his own flock, but set his poor neighbor's one lamb before his to eat. And David's anger being kindled against the man, he commanded that he should be put to death, and the lamb restored fourfold to the poor man; thus unwittingly condemning the sin he had wittingly committed. 2 Samuel 12:1-6 And when he had been shown this, and God's punishment had been denounced against him, he wiped out his sin in deep penitence. But yet in this parable it was the adultery only that was indicated by the poor man's ewe-lamb; about the killing of the woman's husband — that is, about the murder of the poor man himself who had the one ewe-lamb — nothing is said in the parable, so that the sentence of condemnation is pronounced against the adultery alone. And hence we may understand with what temperance he possessed a number of wives when he was forced to punish himself for transgressing in regard to one woman. But in his case the immoderate desire did not take

up its abode with him, but was only a passing . On this account the unlawful appetite is called even by the accusing prophet, a . For he did not say that he took the poor man's ewe-lamb to make a feast for his king, but for his . In the case of his son Solomon, however, this lust did not come and pass away like a , but reigned as a king. And about him Scripture is not silent, but accuses him of being a lover of strange women; for in the beginning of his reign he was inflamed with a desire for wisdom, but after he had attained it through spiritual love, he lost it through carnal lust.

Chapter 22 — Rule Regarding Passages of Scripture in Which Approval is Expressed of Actions Which are Now Condemned by Good Men. Therefore, although all, or nearly all, the transactions recorded in the Old Testament are to be taken not literally only, but figuratively as well, nevertheless even in the case of those which the reader has taken literally, and which, though the authors of them are praised, are repugnant to the habits of the good men who since our Lord's advent are the custodians of the divine commands, let him refer the figure to its interpretation, but let him not transfer the act to his habits of life. For many things which were done as duties at that time, cannot now be done except through lust.

Chapter 23 — Rule Regarding the Narrative of Sins of Great Men. And when he reads of the sins of great men, although he may be able to see and to trace out in them a figure of things to come, let him yet put the literal fact to this use also, to teach him not to dare to vaunt himself in his own good deeds, and in comparison with his own righteousness, to despise others as sinners, when he sees in the case of men so eminent both the storms that are to be avoided and the shipwrecks that are to be wept over. For the sins of these men were recorded to this end, that men might everywhere and always tremble at that saying of the apostle: Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:12 For there is hardly a page of Scripture on which it is not clearly

written that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Chapter 24 — The Character of the Expressions Used is Above All to Have Weight. The chief thing to be inquired into, therefore, in regard to any expression that we are trying to understand is, whether it is literal or figurative. For when it is ascertained to be figurative, it is easy, by an application of the laws of things which we discussed in the first book, to turn it in every way until we arrive at a true interpretation, especially when we bring to our aid experience strengthened by the exercise of piety. Now we find out whether an expression is literal or figurative by attending to the considerations indicated above. Chapter 25 — The Same Word Does Not Always Signify the Same Thing. And when it is shown to be figurative, the words in which it is expressed will be found to be drawn either from like objects or from objects having some affinity. But as there are many ways in which things show a likeness to each other, we are not to suppose there is any rule that what a thing signifies by similitude in one place it is to be taken to signify in all other places. For our Lord used leaven both in a bad sense, as when He said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and in a good sense, as when He said, The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Luke 13:21 Now the rule in regard to this variation has two forms. For things that signify now one thing and now another, signify either things that are contrary, or things that are only different. They signify contraries, for example, when they are used metaphorically at one time in a good sense, at another in a bad, as in the case of the leaven mentioned above. Another example of the same is that a lion stands for Christ in the place where it is said, The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed; Revelation 5:5 and again, stands for the devil where it is written, Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8 In the

same way the serpent is used in a good sense, Be wise as serpents; Matthew 10:16 and again, in a bad sense, The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety. 2 Corinthians 11:3 Bread is used in a good sense, I am the living bread which came down from heaven; John 6:51 in a bad, Bread eaten in secret is pleasant. Proverbs 9:17 And so in a great many other cases. The examples I have adduced are indeed by no means doubtful in their signification, because only plain instances ought to be used as examples. There are passages, however, in regard to which it is uncertain in what sense they ought to be taken, as for example, In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture. Now it is uncertain whether this denotes the wrath of God, but not to the last extremity of punishment, that is, to the very dregs; or whether it denotes the grace of the Scriptures passing away from the Jews and coming to the Gentiles, because He has put down one and set up another, certain observances, however, which they understand in a carnal manner, still remaining among the Jews, for the dregs hereof is not yet wrung out. The following is an example of the same object being taken, not in opposite, but only in different significations: water denotes people, as we read in the Apocalypse, Revelation 17:15 and also the Holy Spirit, as for example, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; John 7:38 and many other things besides water must be interpreted according to the place in which they are found. And in the same way other objects are not single in their signification, but each one of them denotes not two only but sometimes even several different things, according to the connection in which it is found. Chapter 26 — Obscure Passages are to Be Interpreted by Those Which are Clearer. Now from the places where the sense in which they are used is more manifest we must gather the sense in which they are to be understood in obscure passages. For example, there is no better way of understanding the words addressed to God,

Take hold of shield and buckler and stand up for mine help, than by referring to the passage where we read, You, Lord, hast crowned us with Your favor as with a shield. And yet we are not so to understand it, as that wherever we meet with a shield put to indicate a protection of any kind, we must take it as signifying nothing but the favor of God. For we hear also of the shield of faith, wherewith, says the apostle, you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Ephesians 6:16 Nor ought we, on the other hand, in regard to spiritual armor of this kind to assign faith to the shield only; for we read in another place of the breastplate of faith: putting on, says the apostle, the breastplate of faith and love. Chapter 27 — One Passage Susceptible of Various Interpretations. When, again, not some one interpretation, but two or more interpretations are put upon the same words of Scripture, even though the meaning the writer intended remain undiscovered, there is no danger if it can be shown from other passages of Scripture that any of the interpretations put on the words is in harmony with the truth. And if a man in searching the Scriptures endeavors to get at the intention of the author through whom the Holy Spirit spoke, whether he succeeds in this endeavor, or whether he draws a different meaning from the words, but one that is not opposed to sound doctrine, he is free from blame so long as he is supported by the testimony of some other passage of Scripture. For the author perhaps saw that this very meaning lay in the words which we are trying to interpret; and assuredly the Holy Spirit, who through him spoke these words, foresaw that this interpretation would occur to the reader, nay, made provision that it should occur to him, seeing that it too is founded on truth. For what more liberal and more fruitful provision could God have made in regard to the Sacred Scriptures than that the same words might be understood in several senses, all of which are sanctioned by the concurring testimony of other passages equally divine?

Chapter 28 — It is Safer to Explain a Doubtful Passage by Other Passages of Scripture Than by Reason. When, however, a meaning is evolved of such a kind that what is doubtful in it cannot be cleared up by indubitable evidence from Scripture, it remains for us to make it clear by the evidence of reason. But this is a dangerous practice. For it is far safer to walk by the light of Holy Scripture; so that when we wish to examine the passages that are obscured by metaphorical expressions, we may either obtain a meaning about which there is no controversy, or if a controversy arises, may settle it by the application of testimonies sought out in every portion of the same Scripture. Chapter 29 — The Knowledge of Tropes is Necessary. Moreover, I would have learned men to know that the authors of our Scriptures use all those forms of expression which grammarians call by the Greek name tropes, and use them more freely and in greater variety than people who are unacquainted with the Scriptures, and have learned these figures of speech from other writings, can imagine or believe. Nevertheless those who know these tropes recognize them in Scripture, and are very much assisted by their knowledge of them in understanding Scripture. But this is not the place to teach them to the illiterate, lest it might seem that I was teaching grammar. I certainly advise, however, that they be learned elsewhere, although indeed I have already given that advice above, in the second book — namely, where I treated of the necessary knowledge of languages. For the written characters from which grammar itself gets its name (the Greek name for letters being γράμματα are the signs of sounds made by the articulate voice with which we speak. Now of some of these figures of speech we find in Scripture not only examples (which we have of them all), but the very names as well: for instance, allegory, enigma, and parable. However, nearly all these tropes which are said to be learned as a matter of liberal education are found even in

the ordinary speech of men who have learned no grammar, but are content to use the vulgar idiom. For who does not say, So may you flourish? And this is the figure of speech called metaphor. Who does not speak of a fish-pond in which there is no fish, which was not made for fish, and yet gets its name from fish? And this is the figure called catachresis. It would be tedious to go over all the rest in this way; for the speech of the vulgar makes use of them all, even of those more curious figures which mean the very opposite of what they say, as for example, those called irony and antiphrasis. Now in irony we indicate by the tone of voice the meaning we desire to convey; as when we say to a man who is behaving badly, You are doing well. But it is not by the tone of voice that we make an antiphrasis to indicate the opposite of what the words convey; but either the words in which it is expressed are used in the opposite of their etymological sense, as a grove is called lucus from its want of light; or it is customary to use a certain form of expression, although it puts yes for no by a law of contraries, as when we ask in a place for what is not there, and get the answer, There is plenty; or we add words that make it plain we mean the opposite of what we say, as in the expression, Beware of him, for he is a good man. And what illiterate man is there that does not use such expressions, although he knows nothing at all about either the nature or the names of these figures of speech? And yet the knowledge of these is necessary for clearing up the difficulties of Scripture; because when the words taken literally give an absurd meaning, we ought immediately to inquire whether they may not be used in this or that figurative sense which we are unacquainted with; and in this way many obscure passages have had light thrown upon them.

Chapter 30 — The Rules of Tichonius the Donatist Examined. One Tichonius, who, although a Donatist himself, has written most triumphantly against the Donatists (and herein showed himself of a most

inconsistent disposition, that he was unwilling to give them up altogether), wrote a book which he called the Book of Rules, because in it he laid down seven rules, which are, as it were, keys to open the secrets of Scripture. And of these rules, the first relates to the Lord and His body, the second to the twofold division of the Lord's body, the third to the promises and the law, the fourth to species and genus, the fifth to times, the sixth to recapitulation, the seventh to the devil and his body. Now these rules, as expounded by their author, do indeed, when carefully considered, afford considerable assistance in penetrating the secrets of the sacred writings; but still they do not explain all the difficult passages, for there are several other methods required, which are so far from being embraced in this number of seven, that the author himself explains many obscure passages without using any of his rules; finding, indeed, that there was no need for them, as there was no difficulty in the passage of the kind to which his rules apply. As, for example, he inquires what we are to understand in the Apocalypse by the seven angels of the churches to whom John is commanded to write; and after much and various reasoning, arrives at the conclusion that the angels are the churches themselves. And throughout this long and full discussion, although the matter inquired into is certainly very obscure, no use whatever is made of the rules. This is enough for an example, for it would be too tedious and troublesome to collect all the passages in the canonical Scriptures which present obscurities of such a kind as require none of these seven rules for their elucidation. The author himself, however, when commending these rules, attributes so much value to them that it would appear as if, when they were thoroughly known and duly applied, we should be able to interpret all the obscure passages in the law — that is, in the sacred books. For he thus commences this very book: Of all the things that occur to me, I consider none so necessary as to write a little book of rules, and, as

it were, to make keys for, and put windows in, the secret places of the law. For there are certain mystical rules which hold the key to the secret recesses of the whole law, and render visible the treasures of truth that are to many invisible. And if this system of rules be received as I communicate it, without jealousy, what is shut shall be laid open, and what is obscure shall be elucidated, so that a man travelling through the vast forest of prophecy shall, if he follow these rules as pathways of light, be preserved from going astray. Now, if he had said, There are certain mystical rules which hold the key to some of the secrets of the law, or even which hold the key to the great secrets of the law, and not what he does say, the secret recesses of the whole law; and if he had not said What is shut shall be laid open, but, Many things that are shut shall be laid open, he would have said what was true, and he would not, by attributing more than is warranted by the facts to his very elaborate and useful work, have led the reader into false expectations. And I have thought it right to say thus much, in order both that the book may be read by the studious (for it is of very great assistance in understanding Scripture), and that no more may be expected from it than it really contains. Certainly it must be read with caution, not only on account of the errors into which the author falls as a man, but chiefly on account of the heresies which he advances as a Donatist. And now I shall briefly indicate what these seven rules teach or advise. Chapter 31 — The First Rule of Tichonius. The first is about the Lord and His body, and it is this, that, knowing as we do that the head and the body — that is, Christ and His Church — are sometimes indicated to us under one person (for it is not in vain that it is said to believers, You then are Abraham's seed, Galatians 3:29 when there is but one seed of Abraham, and that is Christ), we need not be in a difficulty when a transition is made from the head to the body or from the body to the head, and yet no change made in the

person spoken of. For a single person is represented as saying, He has decked me as a bridegroom with ornaments, and adorned me as a bride with jewels and yet it is, of course, a matter for interpretation which of these two refers to the head and which to the body, that is, which to Christ and which to the Church. Chapter 32 — The Second Rule of Tichonius. The second rule is about the twofold division of the body of the Lord; but this indeed is not a suitable name, for that is really no part of the body of Christ which will not be with Him in eternity. We ought, therefore, to say that the rule is about the true and the mixed body of the Lord, or the true and the counterfeit, or some such name; because, not to speak of eternity, hypocrites cannot even now be said to be in Him, although they seem to be in His Church. And hence this rule might be designated thus: Concerning the mixed Church. Now this rule requires the reader to be on his guard when Scripture, although it has now come to address or speak of a different set of persons, seems to be addressing or speaking of the same persons as before, just as if both sets constituted one body in consequence of their being for the time united in a common participation of the sacraments. An example of this is that passage in the Song of Solomon, I am black, but comely, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Song of Songs 1:5 For it is not said, I was black as the tents of Kedar, but am now comely as the curtains of Solomon. The Church declares itself to be at present both; and this because the good fish and the bad are for the time mixed up in the one net. Matthew 13:47-48 For the tents of Kedar pertain to Ishmael, who shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. Galatians 4:30 And in the same way, when God says of the good part of the Church, I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them; Isaiah 42:16 He

immediately adds in regard to the other part, the bad that is mixed with the good, They shall be turned back. Now these words refer to a set of persons altogether different from the former; but as the two sets are for the present united in one body, He speaks as if there were no change in the subject of the sentence. They will not, however, always be in one body; for one of them is that wicked servant of whom we are told in the gospel, whose lord, when he comes, shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. Matthew 24:50-51 Chapter 33 — The Third Rule of Tichonius. The third rule relates to the promises and the law, and may be designated in other terms as relating to the spirit and the letter, which is the name I made use of when writing a book on this subject. It may be also named, of grace and the law. This, however, seems to me to be a great question in itself, rather than a rule to be applied to the solution of other questions. It was the want of clear views on this question that originated, or at least greatly aggravated, the Pelagian heresy. And the efforts of Tichonius to clear up this point were good, but not complete. For, in discussing the question about faith and works, he said that works were given us by God as the reward of faith, but that faith itself was so far our own that it did not come to us from God; not keeping in mind the saying of the apostle: Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6:23 But he had not come into contact with this heresy, which has arisen in our time, and has given us much labor and trouble in defending against it the grace of God which is through our Lord Jesus Christ, and which (according to the saying of the apostle, There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you 1 Corinthians 11:19) has made us much more watchful and diligent to discover in Scripture what escaped Tichonius, who, having no enemy to guard against, was less attentive and anxious on this

point, namely, that even faith itself is the gift of Him who has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Romans 12:3 Whence it is said to certain believers: Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Philippians 1:29 Who, then, can doubt that each of these is the gift of God, when he learns from this passage, and believes, that each of them is given? There are many other testimonies besides which prove this. But I am not now treating of this doctrine. I have, however, dealt with it, one place or another, very frequently. Chapter 34 — The Fourth Rule of Tichonius. The fourth rule of Tichonius is about species and genus. For so he calls it, intending that by species should be understood a part, by genus the whole of which that which he calls species is a part: as, for example, every single city is a part of the great society of nations: the city he calls a species, all nations constitute the genus. There is no necessity for here applying that subtlety of distinction which is in use among logicians, who discuss with great acuteness the difference between a part and a species. The rule is of course the same, if anything of the kind referred to is found in Scripture, not in regard to a single city, but in regard to a single province, or tribe, or kingdom. Not only, for example, about Jerusalem, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, such as Tyre or Babylon, are things said in Scripture whose significance oversteps the limits of the city, and which are more suitable when applied to all nations; but in regard to Judea also, and Egypt, and Assyria, or any other nation you choose to take which contains numerous cities, but still is not the whole world, but only a part of it, things are said which pass over the limits of that particular country, and apply more fitly to the whole of which this is a part; or, as our author terms it, to the genus of which this is a species. And hence these words have come to be commonly known, so that even uneducated people understand what is laid down specially, and what

generally, in any given Imperial command. The same thing occurs in the case of men: things are said of Solomon, for example, the scope of which reaches far beyond him, and which are only properly understood when applied to Christ and His Church, of which Solomon is a part. 2 Samuel 7:14-16 Now the species is not always overstepped, for things are often said of such a kind as evidently apply to it also, or perhaps even to it exclusively. But when Scripture, having up to a certain point been speaking about the species, makes a transition at that point from the species to the genus, the reader must then be carefully on his guard against seeking in the species what he can find much better and more surely in the genus. Take, for example, what the prophet Ezekiel says: When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way, and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way, and according to their doings, I judged them. Ezekiel 36:17-19 Now it is easy to understand that this applies to that house of Israel of which the apostle says, Behold Israel after the flesh; 1 Corinthians 10:18 because the people of Israel after the flesh did both perform and endure all that is here referred to. What immediately follows, too, may be understood as applying to the same people. But when the prophet begins to say, And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, Ezekiel 36:23 the reader ought now carefully to observe the way in which the species is overstepped and the genus taken in. For he goes on to say: And I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and

will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my commandments, and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses. Ezekiel 36:23-29 Now that this is a prophecy of the New Testament, to which pertain not only the remnant of that one nation of which it is elsewhere said, For though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved, Isaiah 10:22 but also the other nations which were promised to their fathers and our fathers; and that there is here a promise of that washing of regeneration which, as we see, is now imparted to all nations, no one who looks into the matter can doubt. And that saying of the apostle, when he is commending the grace of the New Testament and its excellence in comparison with the Old, You are our epistle . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart, 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 has an evident reference to this place where the prophet says, A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Ezekiel 38:26 Now the heart of flesh from which the apostle's expression, the fleshy tables of the heart, is drawn, the prophet intended to point out as distinguished from the stony heart by the possession of sentient life; and by sentient he understood intelligent life. And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ. This spiritual Israel,

therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former; not that he grudges us the clear apprehension of Scripture, as if we were enemies, but that he deals with us as a physician, giving us a wholesome exercise for our spirit. And therefore we ought to take this saying, And I will bring you into your own land, and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign for ever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living; and we are to understand that this was given to the fathers when it was promised to them for what the fathers believed would be given in its own time was to them, on account of the unchangeableness of the promise and purpose, the same as if it were already given; just as the apostle, writing to Timothy, speaks of the grace which is given to the saints: Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour. 2 Timothy 1:9-10 He speaks of the grace as given at a time when those to whom it was to be given were not yet in existence; because he looks upon that as having been already done in the arrangement and purpose of God, which was to take place in its own time, and he himself speaks of it as now made manifest. It is possible, however, that these words may refer to the land of the age to come, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein the unrighteous shall be unable to

dwell. And so it is truly said to the righteous, that the land itself is theirs, no part of which will belong to the unrighteous; because it is the same as if it were itself given, when it is firmly settled that it shall be given. Chapter 35 — The Fifth Rule of Tichonius. The fifth rule Tichonius lays down is one he designates of times, — a rule by which we can frequently discover or conjecture quantities of time which are not expressly mentioned in Scripture. And he says that this rule applies in two ways: either to the figure of speech called synecdoche, or to legitimate numbers. The figure synecdoche either puts the part for the whole, or the whole for the part. As, for example, in reference to the time when, in the presence of only three of His disciples, our Lord was transfigured on the mount, so that His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as snow, one evangelist says that this event occurred after eight days, Luke 9:28 while another says that it occurred after six days. Now both of these statements about the number of days cannot be true, unless we suppose that the writer who says after eight days, counted the latter part of the day on which Christ uttered the prediction and the first part of the day on which he showed its fulfillment as two whole days; while the writer who says after six days, counted only the whole unbroken days between these two. This figure of speech, which puts the part for the whole, explains also the great question about the resurrection of Christ. For unless to the latter part of the day on which He suffered we join the previous night, and count it as a whole day, and to the latter part of the night in which He arose we join the Lord's day which was just dawning, and count it also a whole day, we cannot make out the three days and three nights during which He foretold that He would be in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:40 In the next place, our author calls those numbers legitimate which Holy Scripture more highly favors such as seven, or ten, or twelve, or any of the other numbers which the diligent reader of Scripture soon comes

to know. Now numbers of this sort are often put for time universal; as for example, Seven times in the day do I praise You, means just the same as His praise shall continually be in my mouth. And their force is exactly the same, either when multiplied by ten, as seventy and seven hundred (whence the seventy years mentioned in Jeremiah may be taken in a spiritual sense for the whole time during which the Church is a sojourner among aliens); Jeremiah 25:11 or when multiplied into themselves, as ten into ten gives one hundred, and twelve into twelve gives one hundred and forty-four, which last number is used in the Apocalypse to signify the whole body of the saints. Revelation 7:4 Hence it appears that it is not merely questions about times that are to be settled by these numbers, but that their significance is of much wider application, and extends to many subjects. That number in the Apocalypse, for example, mentioned above, has not reference to times, but to men. Chapter 36 — The Sixth Rule of Tichonius. The sixth rule Tichonius calls the recapitulation, which, with sufficient watchfulness, is discovered in difficult parts of Scripture. For certain occurrences are so related, that the narrative appears to be following the order of time, or the continuity of events, when it really goes back without mentioning it to previous occurrences, which had been passed over in their proper place. And we make mistakes if we do not understand this, from applying the rule here spoken of. For example, in the book of Genesis we read, And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Genesis 2:8-9 Now here it seems to be indicated that the events last mentioned took place after God had formed man and put him in the garden; whereas the fact is, that the two events having been briefly mentioned, namely, that God planted a garden, and there put the man whom He

had formed, the narrative goes back, by way of recapitulation, to tell what had before been omitted, the way in which the garden was planted: that out of the ground God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Here there follows, The tree of life also was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Next the river is mentioned which watered the garden, and which was parted into four heads, the sources of four streams; and all this has reference to the arrangements of the garden. And when this is finished, there is a repetition of the fact which had been already told, but which in the strict order of events came after all this: And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden. Genesis 2:15 For it was after all these other things were done that man was put in the garden, as now appears from the order of the narrative itself: it was not after man was put there that the other things were done, as the previous statement might be thought to imply, did we not accurately mark and understand the recapitulation by which the narrative reverts to what had previously been passed over. In the same book, again, when the generations of the sons of Noah are recounted, it is said: These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations. Genesis 10:20 And, again, when the sons of Shem are enumerated: These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. Genesis 10:31 And it is added in reference to them all: These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood. And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. Now the addition of this sentence, And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, seems to indicate that at the time when the nations were scattered over the earth they had all one language in common; but this is evidently

inconsistent with the previous words, in their families, after their tongues. For each family or nation could not be said to have its own language if all had one language in common. And so it is by way of recapitulation it is added, And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, the narrative here going back, without indicating the change, to tell how it was, that from having one language in common, the nations were divided into a multitude of tongues. And, accordingly, we are immediately told of the building of the tower, and of this punishment being there laid upon them as the judgment of God upon their arrogance; and it was after this that they were scattered over the earth according to their tongues. This recapitulation is found in a still more obscure form; as, for example, our Lord says in the gospel: The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Luke 17:29-32 Is it when our Lord shall have been revealed that men are to give heed to these sayings, and not to look behind them, that is, not to long after the past life which they have renounced? Is not the present rather the time to give heed to them, that when the Lord shall have been revealed every man may receive his reward according to the things he has given heed to or despised? And yet because Scripture says, In that day, the time of the revelation of the Lord will be thought the time for giving heed to these sayings, unless the reader be watchful and intelligent so as to understand the recapitulation, in which he will be assisted by that other passage of Scripture which even in the time of the apostles proclaimed: Little children, it is the last time. 1 John 2:18 The very time then when the gospel is preached, up to the time that the Lord shall be

revealed, is the day in which men ought to give heed to these sayings: for to the same day, which shall be brought to a close by a day of judgment, belongs that very revelation of the Lord here spoken of. Romans 2:5 Chapter 37 — The Seventh Rule of Tichonius. The seventh rule of Tichonius and the last, is about the devil and his body. For he is the head of the wicked, who are in a sense his body, and destined to go with him into the punishment of everlasting fire, just as Christ is the head of the Church, which is His body, destined to be with Him in His eternal kingdom and glory. Accordingly, as the first rule, which is called of the Lord and His body, directs us, when Scripture speaks of one and the same person, to take pains to understand which part of the statement applies to the head and which to the body; so this last rule shows us that statements are sometimes made about the devil, whose truth is not so evident in regard to himself as in regard to his body; and his body is made up not only of those who are manifestly out of the way, but of those also who, though they really belong to him, are for a time mixed up with the Church, until they depart from this life, or until the chaff is separated from the wheat at the last great winnowing. For example, what is said in Isaiah, How he is fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning! and the other statements of the context which, under the figure of the king of Babylon, are made about the same person, are of course to be understood of the devil; and yet the statement which is made in the same place, He is ground down on the earth, who sends to all nations, does not altogether fitly apply to the head himself. For, although the devil sends his angels to all nations, yet it is his body, not himself, that is ground down on the each, except that he himself is in his body, which is beaten small like the dust which the wind blows from the face of the earth. Now all these rules, except the one about the promises and the law, make one meaning to be understood where another is expressed,

which is the peculiarity of figurative diction; and this kind of diction, it seems to me, is too widely spread to be comprehended in its full extent by any one. For, wherever one thing is said with the intention that another should be understood we have a figurative expression, even though the name of the trope is not to be found in the art of rhetoric. And when an expression of this sort occurs where it is customary to find it, there is no trouble in understanding it; when it occurs, however, where it is not customary, it costs labor to understand it, from some more, from some less, just as men have got more or less from God of the gifts of intellect, or as they have access to more or fewer external helps. And, as in the case of proper words which I discussed above, and in which things are to be understood just as they are expressed, so in the case of figurative words, in which one thing is expressed and another is to be understood, and which I have just finished speaking of as much as I thought enough, students of these venerable documents ought to be counselled not only to make themselves acquainted with the forms of expression ordinarily used in Scripture, to observe them carefully, and to remember them accurately, but also, what is especially and before all things necessary, to pray that they may understand them. For in these very books on the study of which they are intent, they read, The Lord gives wisdom: out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding; Proverbs 2:6 and it is from Him they have received their very desire for knowledge, if it is wedded to piety. But about signs, so far as relates to words, I have now said enough. It remains to discuss, in the following book, so far as God has given me light, the means of communicating our thoughts to others.

