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10. 16. Or do you say that you grant that we should love God, but not the God who is worshiped by the people who accept the authority of the Old Testament? You say, therefore, that we should not worship the God who *made heaven and earth* (Gn 1:1). For he is proclaimed in every part of those volumes. But you yourselves admit that this whole world, which is signified by the words *heaven and earth*, has God — and the good God — as its author and maker. We must, of course, make a distinction in speaking with you when God is mentioned. After all, you maintain that there are two gods, a good God and an evil God. But if you say that you worship and think that one should worship the God by whom the world was made,¹⁵ but not the one whom the authority of the Old Testament commends, you act impudently. For you try — and utterly in vain — to interpret in a bad sense an idea and a statement quite foreign to you, which we accept in a good sense and with profit. Your stupid and wicked arguments cannot be compared in any way, after all, to the words of pious and most learned men who explain those scriptures in the Catholic Church to people who are willing and worthy. We certainly interpret the law and the prophets far, far differently than you suppose. Give up your error. We do not worship a God who is repentant, jealous, needy, or cruel; we do not worship a God who seeks pleasure from the blood of human beings or animals, nor a God who takes pleasure in sins and crimes, nor a God who limits his ownership of the earth to a certain small piece of it. For you are accustomed to inveigh violently and at length against these silly ideas and other similar ones. Hence, your attack does not touch us. Rather, you tear into certain opinions of old wives or even of children¹⁶ with language that is more inept the more violent it is. If anyone is moved by it and crosses over

15. See Jn 1:10.

16. See 1 Tm 4:7.

to you, he does not condemn the teaching of our Church but shows that he is ignorant of it.

17. Hence, if you have any humanity in your heart, if you care about yourselves, seek rather with diligence and piety the sense in which those things are said. Seek, you poor wretches. For we very strongly and at great length denounce such a faith as would believe something unsuitable about God. For, when some people understand those passages that were mentioned in their literal sense, we correct their simplicity and mock their stubbornness. And Catholic discipline forbids those who pass beyond the childhood of the mind and advance toward the gray hairs of wisdom,¹⁷ not by reason of years but by reason of their desire and understanding, to believe many other things that you cannot understand. For it teaches how foolish it is to believe that God is contained in some place, even in an endless space through any stretches whatsoever of expanse. And it is regarded as a sacrilege to think that he or some part of him moves and passes from place to place. And if anyone thinks that something of his substance and nature can in any way suffer change or transformation, he will be condemned for an astonishing madness and impiety. In that way it turns out that there are found among us certain children who think of God in a human form and believe that he is that way. Nothing is more base than that opinion. But there are also found many elders who see by the mind that his majesty, which is not only above the human body but also above that same mind, remains inviolable and immutable. We have already said that these ages are not to be distinguished by time but by virtue and wisdom. Among you, however, no one is found who limits the substance of God by the shape of the human body, but, by the same token, no one is found who is free from the stain of human error. And so, those whom the breasts of the Catholic Church sustain like wailing infants, if they do not fall prey to heretics, are fed, each in accord with his capacity and strength, and are guided, one in this way, another in that. And they come first to complete manhood,¹⁸ then to maturity and the gray hairs of wisdom,¹⁹ in order that, to the extent that they desire, they may live — and live most happily.

11. 18. The pursuit of God, therefore, is the desire for happiness, but the attainment of God is happiness itself. We pursue him by loving, while we attain him not when we become exactly what he is but when we become very close to him, touching him in a marvelous and intelligible way, and are enlightened and seized by his truth and holiness. For he is the light, but we are allowed to be enlightened by that same light.²⁰ *The greatest and first commandment*, then, which leads to eternal life, is: *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind* (Mt 22:38.37). After all, for

17. See Wis 4:8; Sir 6:18.

18. See Eph 4:13.

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those who love God all things move toward the good. For this reason the same Paul says a little later, *I am certain that neither death nor life, neither an angel nor a power, neither present things nor those to come, neither height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom 8:38-39). For those, then, who love God all things move toward the good, and no one doubts that we should not merely love the highest good, which is also called the best, but that we should love it so that we love nothing more. And that is signified and expressed in the words, *with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind*. Once all these points are established and most firmly believed, who, I ask, has any doubt that for us nothing else but God is the highest good and that we ought to hasten to attain him in preference to all other things? Likewise, if nothing separates us from his love,²¹ what can be not only better but also more certain than this good?

19. But let us briefly turn our attention to each point. No one separates us from the love of God by the threat of death. After all, that by which we love God can only die if it does not love God. For it is death not to love God, and that is nothing else than to prefer anything to him in our love and pursuit. No one separates us from the love of God by promising life. For no one separates us from a fountain by promising water. An angel does not separate us from the love of God. For, when we cling to God, an angel is not stronger than our mind. A power does not separate us from the love of God.²² For, if in this case we mean by a power that which has some authority in this world, a mind that clings to God is absolutely superior to the whole world. But, if we mean power in the sense of virtue, that is, a perfectly correct disposition of our mind, when it is present in someone else, it fosters our union with God, but if it is present in us, it unites us with him. Present troubles do not separate us from the love of God. For we find them lighter to the extent that we cling more tightly to him from whom they try to separate us. The promise of things to come does not separate us from the love of God. For God promises with more certainty whatever good is to come, and nothing is better than God himself, who is of course present to those who firmly cling to him. *Neither height nor depth* separate us from the love of God. For, if these words perhaps signify the height or the depth of knowledge, I shall not be curious for fear that I may be separated from God. And no one's teaching separates me from him as if in order to keep me from error, for only someone separated from him is in error. But if height and depth signify the higher and lower parts of this world, who would promise me heaven in order to separate me from the maker of heaven? Or what lower world would terrify me so that I would abandon God? For I would not come to know the lower world if I never aban-

21. See Rom 8:39.

22. The Latin *virtus* can mean a power or a virtue. Augustine explains how in neither sense can such a *virtus* separate one from God.

doned him. Finally, what place would tear me away from the love of him who would not be whole everywhere if he were contained by any place?

12. 20. No other creature, he says, separates me from the love of God.²³ Oh, a man of the deepest mysteries! He was not content to say, "no creature," but he says, *not any other creature*, reminding us that that by which we love God and cling to God, that is, the soul and mind, is a creature. The other creature, then, is the body. And if the soul is an intelligible reality, that is, one that becomes known only by being understood, the other creature is everything sensible, that is, everything that offers some knowledge, as it were, of itself through the eyes or ears or smell or taste or touch and that is necessarily inferior to what is grasped by the intelligence alone. God too can be known by worthy souls only through the intelligence, though he is nonetheless more excellent than the mind by which he is understood, for he is, of course, its creator and author. Hence, there was reason to fear that the human mind might think that it is of the same nature as he is who created it because it is counted among invisible and intelligible things. And in that way it might by pride fall away from him to whom it should be united by love. For the mind becomes like God, insofar as it is granted this, when it subjects itself to him to be enlightened and illumined. And if it becomes very close to him through that subjection by which it becomes like him, the audacity by which it wants to be more like him must become far removed from it. This is the audacity by which it refuses to obey the laws of God when it wants to be in its own power, as God is.²⁴

21. The soul, then, is filled with folly and unhappiness the farther it wanders off from God to things lower than itself not by place but by love and desire. It returns to God, therefore, by the love by which it desires not to make itself equal to God but to make itself subject to him. The more earnestly and zealously it does this, the happier and loftier it will be, and it will be most free when God alone is its lord. Hence, it should know that it is a creature. For it should believe that its creator, as he truly is,²⁵ always remains in the inviolable and immutable nature of truth and wisdom, but it should admit that folly and falsehood can overtake it, at least because of the errors from which it desires to be set free. But, again, it should beware that it is not separated by love for another creature, that is, for this sensible world, from the love of God himself, by which it is made holy in order that it may remain most blessed. Since we ourselves are a creature, no other creature, therefore, separates us *from the love of God, which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord*.

13. 22. Let the same Paul tell us who this Christ Jesus our Lord is. He says, *To those who have been called we preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom*

23. See Rom 8:39.

24. See Gn 3:5.

25. See 1 Jn 3:2.

of God (1 Cor 1:23-24). Why does he say this? Does not Christ himself say, *I am the truth* (Jn 14:6)? If we, therefore, ask what it is to live well, that is, to strive for happiness by one's life, that will of course be to love power, to love wisdom, to love truth, and to love *with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind* the power that is inviolable and unconquered, the wisdom to which no folly draws near, and the truth that cannot change and be otherwise than it always is. Through him we see the Father, for he said, *No one comes to the Father except through me* (Jn 14:6). To him we cling through becoming holy. For, having been made holy, we are ablaze with a love that is whole and entire, a love that alone prevents our being turned away from God and makes us conformed to him rather than to this world.²⁶ *For he predestined us, as the same apostle says, to become conformed to the image of his Son* (Rom 8:29).

23. Love, then, will see to it that we are conformed to God and, having been conformed and configured by him and cut off from this world,²⁷ that we are not confused with the things that ought to be subject to us. But this is done by the Holy Spirit. For the apostle says, *Hope does not produce confusion, since the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Rom 5:5). In no way, however, could we be restored to wholeness by the Holy Spirit if he himself did not always remain whole and immutable. He could not do this, of course, unless he were of the nature and substance of God, which alone always has immutability and, so to speak, unchangeability. *For creation, not I but the same Paul cries out, is subject to vanity* (Rom 8:20). And what is subject to vanity cannot separate us from vanity and unite us to the truth. The Holy Spirit does this for us. He is not a creature, therefore, because everything that exists is either God or a creature.

14.24. Hence, we ought to love God, a certain triple oneness, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and I shall say that God is nothing other than being itself. For God is truly and sovereignly, *from whom are all things, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things* (Rom 11:36a). These are Paul's words. What does he add next? *To him be glory* (Rom 11:36b). He adds this with absolute truth. For he does not say "to them," since God is one.²⁸ What does *to him be glory* mean but that the knowledge of him may be the best and the highest and the most widespread? For the better and the more extensively he is known, the more he is desired and the more ardently he is loved. When this happens, the human race does nothing but advance with a sure and constant step toward the best and happiest life. Since our question concerns morals and life, I do not think that we need to seek further what the highest good of a human being is to which all things must be directed. It has become evident, after all, that it is nothing but

26. See Rom 12:2.

27. See Phil 3:10; Col 2:11.

28. See Dt 4:35; Mk 12:32; Rom 3:30; Rom 11:36.

God himself — both from reason, to the extent that we were capable, and from that divine authority which surpasses our reason. For what else will be the greatest good for a human being but he to whom it is most blessed to cling.²⁹ But that is God alone, to whom we can certainly only cling by longing, desire, and love.

15.25. But if virtue brings us to the happy life, I would say that virtue is absolutely nothing but the highest love of God. For virtue is said to be fourfold, insofar as I understand it, because of a certain varied disposition of love. And so I do not hesitate to define those four virtues — I wish that their power were in the minds of all as their names are on their lips — as follows: Temperance is love offering itself in its integrity to the beloved. Fortitude is love easily tolerating all things on account of the beloved. Justice is love serving the beloved alone and as a result ruling righteously. And prudence is love that wisely separates those things by which it is helped from those by which it is impeded. But we said that this love is not a love of just anything but of God, that is, of the highest good, the highest wisdom, and the highest harmony. Hence, it is also permissible to define them as follows: Temperance is love preserving itself whole and entire for God. Fortitude is love readily enduring all things for God. Justice is love that serves only God and, for this reason, correctly governs other things that are subject to a human being. And prudence is love distinguishing correctly those things by which it is helped toward God from those things by which it can be impeded.

16.26. I shall explain in a few words what sort of life one may lead with respect to each of these virtues after I have compared (as I promised) testimonies from the New Testament, which I have been using for a long time, to similar testimonies from the Old Testament. After all, does Paul alone say that we ought to be subject to God so that there is nothing in between that separates us?³⁰ Does not the prophet signify this most aptly and briefly when he says, *But it is good for me to cling to God* (Ps 73:28)? Is not what Paul said at such great length about love here contained in the one word the prophet uses, *cling*? So too, do not the words he added, *it is good, correspond to the words that were used by Paul, For those who love God all things move toward the good, so that by one short sentence with its two parts the prophet reveals the forcefulness and benefit of love?*

27. Paul said that the Son of God is the power and wisdom of God,³¹ and power is understood to have to do with action, while wisdom is understood to have to do with teaching. For this reason these two are signified in the gospel. It says there, *All things were made through him* (Jn 1:3). For this has to do with action and power. Then, with regard to teaching and the knowledge of the truth,

29. See Ps 73:28.

30. See 1 Cor 15:27; Phil 3:21.

31. See 1 Cor 1:24.

it says, *And the life was the light of human beings* (Jn 1:4). Could anything fit better with these testimonies from the New Testament than the words of the Old Testament about wisdom: *But it reaches from end to end mightily and arranges all things pleasingly* (Wis 8:1)? For “to reach mightily” rather signifies power, while “to arrange pleasingly” signifies in a sense art and reason. But if this seems obscure, look at what follows. It says, *And the Lord of all loved her, for she teaches God’s discipline and chooses his works* (Wis 8:3-4). Here nothing seems as yet to have been said about action. For to choose works is not the same as to do them. Hence, these have to do with discipline. The activity of power is needed in order that the idea which we want to demonstrate may be complete. Read, therefore, what follows next. It says, *If wealth that is desired in this life is honorable, what is more honorable than the wisdom that produces all things?* (Wis 8:5) Can anything be said that is clearer, more obvious, or even more useful? If you think it is not enough, listen to another verse that makes the same point: *For wisdom teaches sobriety and justice and power* (Wis 8:7).³² Sobriety seems to me to pertain to the knowledge of the truth, that is, to teaching, but justice and power to activity and action. I do not know what I should compare to these two, that is, to the effectiveness of action and the sobriety of contemplation, which the power of God and the wisdom of God,³³ that is, the Son of God, gives to those who love him. For the prophet himself immediately says how highly these should be valued. He expressed it in this way: *For wisdom teaches sobriety and justice and power, than which there is nothing more useful in life for human beings* (Wis 8:7).

28. Someone may perhaps think that this was not said about the Son of God. What else, then, do these words show: *Sharing his tent with God, he reveals his noble origin* (Wis 8:3)? Does *noble origin* usually signify anything else than one’s parents? Does not *sharing his tent* cry out and assert his equality with the Father? Secondly, since Paul says that the Son of God is *the wisdom of God* and since the Lord himself says, *No one knows the Father but the only-begotten Son* (Mt 11:27; Jn 1:18), what could the prophet have said that is more in harmony with this than his words: *And with you is wisdom who knows your works, who was present when you made the world and knew what would be pleasing in your eyes* (Wis 9:9)? But as for Christ’s being the truth,³⁴ the same thing that is revealed when he is called the splendor of the Father,³⁵ is there anything surrounding the sun but the splendor that the sun itself begets? What, then, from the Old Testament could more evidently and clearly correspond to this idea than the words: *Your truth surrounding you* (Ps 89:9)? Finally, wisdom himself says in the gospel, *No one comes to the Father except through me* (Jn 14:6). The

32. See *Revisions* 1, 6 (7), 3.

33. See 1 Cor 1:24.

34. See Jn 14:6.

35. See Heb 1:3.

prophet says, *Who, then, knows your mind unless you give wisdom?* (Wis 9:17) And a little later he says, *Men have learned what pleases you and have been healed through wisdom* (Wis 9:18-19).

29. Paul says, *The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Rom 5:5). The prophet says, *For the Holy Spirit of discipline will banish deceit* (Wis 1:5). For, where there is deceit, there is no love.³⁶ Paul says that we are becoming conformed to the image of the Son of God.³⁷ The prophet says, *The light of your countenance, O Lord, has been impressed upon us* (Ps 4:7). Paul shows that the Holy Spirit is God and for that reason not a creature. The prophet says, *And you will send the Holy Spirit from the greatest heights* (Wis 9:17). For God alone is the most high, than whom there is nothing higher. Paul shows that this Trinity is one God when he says, *To him be glory*. In the Old Testament it says, *Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one God* (Dt 6:4).

17. 30. What more do you want? Why do you rage in ignorance and impiety? Why do you upset uneducated souls with your harmful views? There is one God of the two Testaments. For, just as those testimonies that we quoted from the two Testaments are in harmony with one another, so the others are as well, if you are willing to pay attention to them carefully and with an unbiased mind. But many things are said in a rather lowly manner and in a way better suited to minds that creep along the ground in order that they may rise through what is human to what is divine, and many things are also said in a symbolic manner in order that a studious mind may have more useful exercise in the questions it asks and may have richer delight in the answers it finds. And so you misuse the marvelous providential plan of the Holy Spirit to deceive and ensnare your hearers. It would take a long time to discuss why divine providence allows you to do this and how truthfully the apostle said, *It is necessary that there be many heresies in order that the tried and true among you may become known* (1 Cor 11:19),³⁸ and, as has to be said to you, it is beyond your ability to understand these things. After all, I am not lacking knowledge of you. For you bring minds that are too dense and sick, because of the deadly food of bodily images, to pronounce judgment on the things of God, which are much more lofty than you think.

31. Hence, we should not at present work with you in order that you may now understand these ideas, for that is not possible, but in order that you may desire to understand them at some point. For the simple and pure love of God, which is especially seen in one’s way of life, brings this about, and we have already said many things about this love. Once it has been breathed into us by the Holy

36. See 1 Cor 13:4-5.

37. See Rom 8:29.

38. Here and in *True Religion* 8. 44 Augustine’s text adds “many” (*multas*).

Spirit,³⁹ it leads us to the Son, that is, to the wisdom of God,⁴⁰ through whom the Father himself comes to be known. For, if wisdom or truth is not desired by the full strength of the mind, it cannot in any way be found. But if it is sought, as it should be, it cannot withdraw itself and hide itself from its lovers. This is the reason for those words that you too often have on your lips: *Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened for you* (Mt 7:7; Lk 11:9). *Nothing is hidden that will not be revealed* (Mt 10:26; Lk 12:2). Love asks; love seeks; love knocks; love reveals; love, finally, remains in what has been revealed. The Old Testament does not deter us from this love of wisdom and from diligence in seeking it, as you constantly say with your lies: rather, it most vigorously urges us on to this.

32. Listen, therefore, at long last, and notice, please, without stubbornness what the prophet says. He says, *Wisdom is bright and never fades; she is easily seen by those who love her and found by those who seek her. She anticipates those who desire her and reveals herself to them. He who keeps watch for her will not labor, for he will find her sitting at his door. For to think of her is perfect knowledge, and he who keeps watch on account of her will quickly be free of worries. For she goes about seeking those who are worthy of her, joyfully reveals herself to them in the streets, and helps them with all her foresight. For the truest beginning of her is the desire for discipline. A concern for discipline, therefore, is love, and love is the observance of the laws. But the observance of the laws is an assurance of incorruptibility, and incorruptibility makes one close to God. The desire for wisdom, therefore, leads to the kingdom.* (Wis 6:12-20) Will you still bark against this? Expressed in this way, even if they are not yet understood, do these words not signify to anyone that they contain something lofty and ineffable? Oh, how I wish that you could understand what was said! You would quickly cast off all the nonsense of your myths and all the utterly vain images of bodies, and you would bring yourselves whole and entire with great speed, sincere love, and the firmest faith to the most holy bosom of the Catholic Church.

18, 33. In accord with my modest ability I could have discussed each point and singled out and demonstrated those that I grasped and those at whose excellence and depth words generally fail, but as long as you bark in opposition, I ought not to do that. After all, it was not said in vain: *Do not give what is holy to the dogs* (Mt 7:6). Do not become angry. I too barked in opposition and was a dog when people rightfully dealt with me not with the food of doctrine but with the rods of refutation. But if you had the love we are now discussing or even if you will ever have it as much as the greatness of the truth to be known demands, God will be there to show you that the Manicheans do not have the Christian

39. See Rom 5:5.
40. See 1 Cor 1:24.