

## INTRODUCTION.

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ST. AUGUSTIN, the illustrious Bishop of Hippo, being asked what was the best method of teaching religion, replied in his admirable treatise, *Manner of teaching the ignorant*: "The true method of teaching religion is to begin with these words, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, and develop the whole history of Christianity down to our own time. It will not be requisite to relate all the particulars of the Old and New Testament, a labor neither feasible nor necessary. Make an abridgment, insist on what seem to you the most important points. . . . In order to show the whole scope of religion, bear in mind that the Old Testament is the figure of the New; that the entire Mosaic religion, the patriarchs, their lives, their covenants, their sacrifices, are so many figures of what we see; that the whole Jewish people and their government are but a GREAT PROPHET of Jesus Christ and of the Church."

This, according to St. Augustin, should be the teaching of the *letter* of religion. The holy doctor, faithful interpreter of the divine Master, makes the *spirit* of religion consist in the *love of God and our neighbor*; he speaks thus: "Commencing your account from the creation of all things in a state of perfection, and bringing it down to the existing period of the Church, your sole aim will be to show that every