

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 12

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

Volume 12

Origen's Homilies on Jeremiah, and the Greek
Fragments and Scholia

c. AD 230 – 250

S E R M O N I N D E X

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Volume 12: Origen's Homilies on Jeremiah, and the Greek Fragments and Scholia

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

How this book is arranged

This is the twelfth volume of a series that gathers the writings of the early Church in order of date, from the generation after the apostles down to the eighth century. This volume completes the writings of Origen with his Homilies on Jeremiah and the Greek fragments and scholia that remain.

Within each work the text is divided into chapters and numbered sections, so that any passage can be found again and cited. The small bold figures in the text are the section numbers.

The translations

The text is in English only. Wherever a modern English version has been prepared for SermonIndex it is used here; otherwise the book prints an older public-domain translation. In both cases the wording is the translator's own: older translations have not been altered beyond dividing them into sections. The sources for every work are listed at the back of the book, together with the licence under which each text is released. All the works in this volume are printed in the modern English versions prepared for SermonIndex.

In this volume

The Homilies on Jeremiah are twenty sermons preached by Origen to a church congregation at Caesarea, and they are among the few of his sermons that survive in the original Greek. They show him at work as a preacher: reading the text, pressing its meaning on his hearers, and turning to the life of the church.

The rest of the volume gathers what remains of Origen's commentaries in Greek. Much of it comes from catenae, which are "commentary chains" in which a later compiler set the comments of several Fathers beside each verse. A fragment may be shortened or reworded by the compiler, and some of the pieces are ascribed to Origen by editors without full certainty. The introduction to each work says what is known.

Dates and authorship

Dates are approximate and are debated by scholars. Each work begins with a short introduction that states what is known about its author and its date, and what is uncertain.

P A R T O N E

Homilies on Jeremiah

Twenty sermons preached at Caesarea, among the few of Origen's homilies that survive in Greek.

Homilies on Jeremiah

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 240–250

Twenty homilies preached by Origen on the prophet Jeremiah, in Greek, for a church congregation in Caesarea. They are among the few of Origen's sermons that survive in the original language. Homilies 1 to 11 are in the Sources Chrétiennes tradition, and the Greek of 12 to 20 follows the Philocalia and the Vatican manuscript. Twelve more survive only in Jerome's Latin and are not included.

HOMILY 1

¹ God is quick to do good, but slow to punish those who deserve punishment. He could bring punishment on those he has condemned in silence, without giving any warning beforehand. But he never does this. Even when he condemns, he speaks, so that the one who is about to be condemned may turn back from the sentence. We could take many examples of this from the Scriptures, but a few that lie close at hand are enough, so that we may come to the purpose of the passages that have been read. The Ninevites had become sinners and had been condemned by God. In three more days Nineveh was to [be overthrown]. God did not want to condemn it in silence. He gave them room for repentance and conversion and sent a prophet, so that when he said, "Three more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown," those who had been condemned might not be condemned after all, but might repent and receive God's mercy. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were also condemned, as is clear from God's words to Abraham. Yet the angels still did their part. They wanted to save people who did not want to be saved, and said to Lot, "Do you have anyone here, sons-in-law, or sons, or daughters?" They were not ignorant that those people would not follow Lot. They were acting out of their own kindness and love for humanity, and at the same time that of the one who sent them.

² You will find the same thing in the case of Jeremiah. The time of his prophecy has been recorded: when he began and how long he prophesied. Now a reader who does not pay attention to the reading, and does not examine the intention of the passages written down, will say, "This is just history. It is recorded when Jeremiah began to prophesy, and for how long he prophesied before he stopped. What is that to me?" I read it and learned that he began to prophesy "in the days of Josiah son of Amos, king of Judah, until the thirteenth year of his reign." Then "it came to pass in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah," that he was prophesying, "until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah." And I learned that his prophecy extended through three kings, "until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month." So what are we taught by these things, if we pay attention to the reading?

³ God had condemned Jerusalem because of her sins, and the people had been judged to be abandoned to captivity. Even so, God, who loves humanity, when the time was at hand, sent this prophet too, well before the third reign, the one in which the captivity came, so that those who were willing might understand and repent because of the prophetic words. He sent a prophet to prophesy under the second king after the first, and under the third, right up to the time of the captivity itself. For the patient God was granting forbearance even one day, so to speak, before the captivity, urging those who heard to repent so that the gloom of captivity might cease. This is why it is written that "Jeremiah prophesied until the captivity of Jerusalem, until the fifth month." He began, and was still prophesying, as if to say: "You have become captives. Even so, repent! If you repent, the captivity will make no further progress, but God's mercy will come upon you." So we gain something useful from the record that gives the times of the prophecy: God, in his love for humanity, urges those who hear not to suffer the captivity. The same kind of thing applies to us. If we sin, we too are going to become captives. For "to hand such a person over to Satan" is no different from handing over the people of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar. As they were handed over to him because of their sins, so we are handed over to Satan because of our sins, since Satan is Nebuchadnezzar. And the apostle says of other sinners, "whom I have handed over to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

⁴ So consider how great an evil it is to sin. Those who sin are handed over to Satan, who takes captive the souls of those whom God has abandoned. Yet

God does not abandon without cause or without judgment those he has abandoned. When he sends rain on a vineyard, and the vineyard bears thorns instead of grapes, what will God do but “command the clouds not to rain” on that vineyard? Because of our sins, captivity hangs over us too. Unless we repent, we are going to be handed over to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, so that the Babylonians of the mind may tear us apart. While this threatens us, the words of the prophets, the words of the law, the words of the apostles, and the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ speak to us about repentance and urge us to turn back. If we listen, let us believe the one who said: “I too will repent of all the evils that I spoke of doing to them.” That is enough for the introduction.

⁵ After the introduction it is written that “the word of the Lord came to him” — clearly, to Jeremiah. And what does the word of the Lord say to him? Something set apart from what was said to the other prophets. We have found this said to none of the prophets. Abraham was called a prophet in the words “he is a prophet and will pray for you,” and yet God did not say to him, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you.” Rather, Abraham was sanctified at some later time, when he went out from his land, from his kindred, and from his father’s house. He was born by promise, and we did not find this word spoken even to him. And why do I need to list the others in turn? Jeremiah received a distinctive gift: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you.”

^{6a} We are not unaware that some people apply these words to our Savior and Lord, as being too great for Jeremiah. We should know that many of them fit him well and can be applied to the Savior, and I will set them out. But a few of the things said to Jeremiah put pressure on that interpretation, because they cannot be fitted to the Savior in the same way as the many. Which ones, then, fit the Savior? “You shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak according to all that I command you. Do not be afraid before their face, for I am with you to rescue you, says the Lord.” These words perhaps would not yet seem to apply to the Savior. But what follows puts pressure on the interpretation concerning Jeremiah: “And the Lord stretched out his hand to me and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: Behold, I have given my words into your mouth. Behold, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to tear down.”

What nations did Jeremiah uproot? What kingdoms did he overthrow? For it is written: "Behold, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to tear down." And what authority did Jeremiah have "to destroy," which is said to Jeremiah in the words "and to destroy"? Whom did Jeremiah build up, so many that it could be said "and to build"? Jeremiah says: "I have not benefited anyone, and no one has benefited me." So how was "to build and to plant" given to him? How will "to plant" fit Jeremiah?

^{6b} The passages that refer to the Savior do not trouble the interpreter, because in these Jeremiah is a symbol of the Savior. But the passages I have set beside them trouble even the wisest person who wants to show how they too could fit the Savior. "And I said: O Lord, Master, you who are, behold, I do not know how to speak." He who is wisdom and power brought us [the fullness of the deity, which dwelt in him bodily]. So how can "I do not [know how to speak]" fit the Savior? And "I am younger" is something the Savior is forbidden to say, as though he were speaking wrongly. For if the Lord says to him, "Do not say this," it is clear that he forbids it because it is not well said. So these words do not fit the Savior. The others, however, do not seem to be an obstacle with regard to the Savior. It would not be hard to say that these words refer to Jeremiah and those to the Savior. But the fair-minded person will be greatly troubled at this passage. He sees that it is the mark of unreasonable people to cut up a connected sequence of words that were spoken either to Jeremiah or to the Savior. They say of some: "Since these are lesser things, they fit Jeremiah and not Christ." And of others: "Since these are greater than Jeremiah, they fit not Jeremiah but Christ." So should the whole passage be referred to Jeremiah? Then let those words that seem greater than Jeremiah be interpreted [in that light].

^{7a} Everyone who has received words from God and has the grace of heavenly words has received them for this: "to uproot and tear down nations and kingdoms." But if "nations and kingdoms" are said to be "uprooted" by everyone who has received words from God, do not understand the nations and kingdoms in a bodily way. Understand instead human souls ruled by sin, as the apostle says: "Let sin not reign in our mortal body." Look also at the many kinds of sins, and read the nations and kingdoms figuratively as the evil things in human souls. These are uprooted and torn down by the words of God given to Jeremiah or to anyone at all. So the first set of sayings, the ones that trouble us when applied to the Savior, can fit Jeremiah. And the

second set, for someone who knows how to read figuratively, can also fit Jeremiah. Someone among the hearers will say to me: “Work out the other part of the argument too, and try to show that everything that is written fits the Savior.” About the second set, do not worry. It is plain that the Savior uprooted the kingdoms of the devil and tore down the nations, by demolishing the pagan way of life. But here is the part that seems to speak ill of the Savior. Work out somehow how the Savior can say, “I do not know how to speak, because I am younger.” Do you see how the argument is cramped? We know the Savior as Lord. We are seeking to apply these words to the Savior in a way that is worthy of the word and true to the truth.

7b We must take the Scriptures as witnesses. Our own proposals without witnesses, and our interpretations, are not to be trusted. The saying “At the mouth of two and three witnesses every word will be established” fits interpretations better than it fits people. So I will establish the words of my interpretation by taking two witnesses, from the New and the Old Testament, and three witnesses, from gospel, prophet and apostle. For in this way every word will be established. How then can we apply these words to the Savior? Bring a witness from the Old Testament: “For before the child knows good or evil, he refuses to obey wickedness, so as to choose the good.” This was said plainly about the Savior in Isaiah: “Behold, the virgin will conceive in the womb and bear a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel.” And there the words “before the child knows” are added. And if we must also take an example from the gospel: Jesus did not become a grown man at once but was still a child, since “he emptied himself,” and he was advancing. For no one who has been made perfect advances; only someone who needs to advance does so. So he advanced in stature, advanced in wisdom, and in favor with God and people, coming down here. Having emptied himself, he received again from the very things from which “he emptied himself.” Since he emptied himself willingly, what is absurd about his also advancing “in wisdom and stature and favor with God and people”? What is absurd about its being truly said of him, “Before he knows good or evil, he will choose the good and refuses to obey wickedness,” and about what I quoted from Isaiah?

8a But someone will say: “Even if you can bring yourself to apply the words ‘he does not know’ to the Savior, does it not trouble you to say this about the only-begotten, about the firstborn of all creation, about the one announced before his conception in the words, ‘The Holy Spirit will come

upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'? And you say, 'He does not know how to speak?'" See whether you can discern something worthy and great about the Savior in this passage: when someone does not know certain things, he can be greater in not knowing them than in knowing them. And I use his own voice as witness that there are things he does not know. He says, for instance, to those who say to him, "Did we not eat in your name, and drink in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" "Depart from me; I never knew you." Does the "I never knew you" spoken there by the Savior show his power to be less, or greater and more wonderful, because he did not know those who were worse and were perishing? For he knew what is better and excellent, and "the Lord knew those who are his," and "if anyone is ignorant, he is not known." So the sinner is not known by God. One of the hearers will say to me: "You have shown that he does not know sinners, that he does not know those who work lawlessness, for they are not worthy of his knowledge. But how will you show that it is something great and glorious when the Savior says, 'I do not know how to speak'? Speaking is a human thing. To speak is to use a language, so as to utter, say, a Hebrew voice, or a Greek one, or that of some other people."

^{8b} If you go up to the Savior and see him as the Word who was "in the beginning with God," you will see that he does not know how to speak, since speaking is a human thing. But the reason he does not know is that what he does know is greater than speaking. And if you compare the tongues of angels with the tongues of human beings, and recognize that he is greater even than the angels, as the apostle testified in the letter to the Hebrews, you will say that he was greater even than the tongue of angels when he was God, the Word with the Father. So he learns, and as it were takes up a knowledge not of great things but of lesser and smaller ones. It is like my own case: I force myself to learn to stammer when I talk with little children. Since I do not really know how to speak the way children do, so to say, I compel myself, though I am mature, to converse with children. In the same way the Savior, while he is "in the Father" and in the majesty of God's glory, does not speak human things and does not know how to utter sounds to those below. But when he comes into a human body, he says at the beginning, "I do not know how to speak, for I am younger." He is younger because of his bodily birth, but older according to the title "firstborn of all creation." He is younger be-

cause he came to live among us at the consummation of the ages, later in time. So when he says “I do not know how to speak,” he means: I know something greater than speaking, I know something greater than this human sound. Do you want me to speak to human beings? I have not yet taken up a human language. I have your language, Father; I am your Word, God’s Word; I know how to converse with you, but I do not know how to speak to human beings. “I am younger.”

9 “Do not say, ‘I am younger,’ for you shall go to everyone to whom I send you.” In this way he stretches out his hand, touches his mouth, and gives him words. He gives him words because of the kingdoms, so that he may uproot them. But when he was “in the Father,” he had no need of words that uproot; he had no words that tear down and demolish the worse things. For nothing there was worthy of being torn down, nothing worthy of being uprooted. It is a great thing, as in “I do not know you; you are workers of lawlessness.” So when the Savior says it because of the surpassing greatness of his glory, “I do not know how to speak” carries the same force as “I do not know how to speak human things.” 10a Whether this is said to Jeremiah or to the Savior, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,” read Genesis and pay attention to what it says about the creation of the world. You will find that Scripture, with great precision, did not say, “Before I made you in the womb I knew you.” When the one “in the image” was created, “God said, Let us make man according to our image and likeness.” He did not say, “Let us form.” But when he took “dust from the earth,” he did not “make” the man; rather he “formed the man,” and “he put in the garden the man whom he had formed.” [The text is badly damaged here and cannot be restored with confidence.] So the Lord, whether speaking to Jeremiah or to the Savior, did not say, “Before I made you in the womb”; he said “formed,” because this one, from the dust of the earth, is created in the womb. “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” If the Lord knew everyone in this way [the text is corrupt here], he would not have said “and I know you” to Jeremiah as something special.

10b So God knows those who stand out. God knows those who are worthy of his knowledge, and “the Lord knew those who are his.” But the unworthy God does not know, just as the Savior said, “I never knew you.” We too, being human, judge according to our progress that some things are worthy of our knowing them. Some things we do not even want to hear, so that we

may not come to know them or be acquainted with them, while others we want to know. What of the God of all? He wants to know Pharaoh, he wants to know the Egyptians, yet they are not worthy of God's knowledge. Moses is worthy, and so is each of the prophets of such a stature. You must set right many things before God begins to know you. Jeremiah he knew before he formed him in the womb. Another he begins to know at thirty years of age, another at forty. These are hidden matters. Concerning the Savior they are not in question, but concerning Jeremiah they call for careful attention from those who have ears.

¹¹ How does he say it? "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you." God sanctifies certain people for himself. He did not wait for this man to come into being and then sanctify him; before he came out of the womb he had already sanctified him. If you refer this to the Savior, it is not hard to say that he was sanctified before coming out of the womb. If you refer it to the Savior, he was sanctified not only before he came out, but even earlier still. But this Jeremiah was sanctified before he came out of the womb. ¹² "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." If you look into this "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" as said of Jeremiah, notice in what follows that he is commanded to prophesy "against all the nations," and there is a heading: "What Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations," to "Elam," "Damascus," "Moab." And so we have it that he "prophesied against all the nations," as the literal fulfillment of "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations," said to him. But if the words are taken in a higher sense: for Jeremiah we have already said what is needed; for the Savior, what need is there to say anything? He truly prophesied against all the nations. For just as he is countless other things, so he is also a prophet. As he is high priest, as he is Savior, as he is physician, so he is also prophet. Moses, at any rate, prophesying about him, spoke of him not simply as a prophet but in a special way, saying: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like me; to him you shall listen, and whoever does not listen to that prophet will be utterly destroyed from his people." So this is the one who has been appointed a prophet "to the nations." He received grace from God poured out on his lips, so that not only when he was present in the body, but now also, when he is present in power and in the Spirit, he prophesies "to all the na-

tions,” so that his prophecy is carried out among all the nations and draws people to salvation.

^{13a} “And I said: O Being, Master and Lord, see, I do not know how to speak, because I am younger.” “And the Lord said to me: Do not say, ‘I am younger,’ because you shall go to all those to whom I send you.” We have often said that a person can be a child in the inner man even if he is of an old man’s age in the body. And sometimes a person can be a child in the outer man while being a grown man in the inner man. Jeremiah was like this: he already had grace from God while still a child in bodily age. That is why the Lord says to him, “Do not say, ‘I am younger.’” The sign that he was not younger, but a “perfect man,” is this: “You shall go to all those to whom I send you, and you shall speak according to everything I command you. Do not be afraid of their faces.” The word of God knows that those who carry out its embassy are in danger from those who hear. When they are rebuked, they hate the messengers; when they are reproved, they persecute them. The prophets suffer absolutely anything: “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.”

^{13b} We mentioned this verse not long ago. So God, when he sends the prophet, knows how many dangers he will take on, and he says to him: “Do not be afraid of their faces, because I am with you to rescue you, says the Lord.” What Jeremiah suffered is on record. He was thrown into a pit of mud and stayed there, “eating one loaf a day” and drinking only water. His prophecy has made known countless other things he suffered. “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” That was said to the Jews. And it is necessary that “those who want to live godly in Christ Jesus” be persecuted, by the opposing powers, through whatever instruments they find. So let those who are persecuted not be surprised, but let them do everything they should, only praying that they be persecuted unjustly and not justly: not for wrongdoing, not for sin, not for greed. But if someone is ever persecuted for righteousness’ sake, let him hear: “Blessed are you when they reproach you and persecute you and say every evil word against you, lying, on my account. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward is great in heaven. For in this way they persecuted the prophets before you.”

^{14a} “Because I am with you to rescue you, says the Lord. And the Lord stretched out his hand to me and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me.” Notice the differences between Jeremiah and Isaiah. Isaiah says: “I have

unclean lips, and I live among a people who have unclean lips, and with my eyes I have seen the King, the Lord Sabaoth.” Since he confessed that what was unclean in him was not deeds but only little words (up to this point he was a sinner), “the Lord” did not “stretch out his hand.” Instead, “one of the Seraphim touched his lips with his hand and said: See, I have taken away your lawless acts.” But this man, Jeremiah, was sanctified “from the womb.” So no tongs are sent to him, nor a coal “from the altar” (he had nothing in him that deserved the fire). Rather, the Lord’s own hand touched him. That is why he says: “The Lord stretched out his hand to me and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: See, I have given my words into your mouth. See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms, to uproot.” Who is so blessed as to uproot, by the words God gives, the many kingdoms that “the devil shows”? These are kingdoms of the opposing powers, kingdoms that rest on sins. For it is written: “See, I have given my words into your mouth. See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms, to uproot.” Just as there are kingdoms, so there are nations. And nothing can be called a kingdom unless it has nations under it. For example, there is a kingdom of fornication, and each particular fornication is a nation of fornication. The general sin of greed and of defrauding is one kingdom, and there are many kingdoms among those who commit many kinds of sins.

^{14b} Next, think of the nations under each kingdom as belonging to each sinner. One person, we might say, has many nations belonging to the kingdom of fornication. Another has many nations belonging to the kingdom of defrauding, or of slander, or of anger. When God’s words are sent out “over nations and kingdoms,” their work is “to uproot and to dig down.” Uproot what? The Savior taught us when he said, “Every planting which my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.” There are things inside our souls which “the heavenly Father did not plant.” All the “evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, blasphemies” are plantings, and the heavenly Father did not plant them. If you want to know whose plantings such thoughts are, hear this: “An enemy man did this,” the one who sowed the “weeds in the middle of the wheat.” So God stands there with his seeds, and the devil stands there with his. If we give “place to the devil,” “the enemy” sows a planting [which the Father did not plant, but the devil did], and it will certainly be uprooted. If we do not give “place to the devil,” but give place to God, God gladly sows his seeds on the ruling part of

our soul. So do not suppose that Jeremiah received a gloomy gift from God because he was appointed “over nations and over kingdoms, to uproot.” God is good, because through his words he uproots what is worthless: the kingdoms hostile to the kingdom of the heavens, and the warring nations hostile to the nation of God. “To uproot and to dig down.”

¹⁵ There is a building of the devil, and there is a building of God. The building “on the sand” is the devil’s, because it is fixed on nothing firm, solid or united. The building “on the rock” is God’s. See what is said to those who belong to God: “You are God’s field, God’s building.” So God’s words are “over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to dig down and to destroy.” Suppose something is uprooted, but the thing uprooted is not destroyed. Then it still exists. Suppose something is dug down, but the stones of what was dug down are not destroyed. Then it still exists. So it belongs to God’s goodness, after uprooting, to destroy what has been uprooted, and after pulling down, to destroy what has been pulled down. Read carefully how such things are destroyed in the case of what is destroyed and uprooted: “Burn the chaff with unquenchable fire,” and “Bind the weeds in bundles and hand them over to fire.” So after being uprooted, they are destroyed. If you want to see what is destroyed even after a demolition, take the building made of worthless material. That house which was pulled down because of leprosy becomes dust, and once it has become dust it is thrown out “outside the city,” so that not even a stone remains. This is like “I will grind them fine like the mud of the streets.” For the worse things must not hold together in any way. If something has been dug down, the stones must not be useful for another building, which the evil one could build. If something has been uprooted, he must not [again] find seeds among the uprooted things, so that he could sow weeds over them again. For surely, since he had the seeds of the weeds, he sowed them. For this reason: “Bind the weeds and burn them with fire.” Then, after being uprooted, the devil’s planting is destroyed, and after being dug down, the devil’s building is destroyed.

^{16a} But the words of God do not stop at “uprooting, tearing down and destroying.” Suppose the evil things have been uprooted from me and the worse things torn down. What good is that to me, unless better things are planted in place of what was uprooted? What good is it, unless something of greater worth is built in place of what was torn down? For this reason the words of God of necessity first do the “uprooting, tearing down and destroy-

ing,” and after these the “building and planting.” In Scripture we have always observed that the grim-looking things, if I may call them that, are named first, and then the things that seem cheerful are spoken of second. “I will kill and I will make alive.” He did not say, “I will make alive,” and after that, “I will kill.” For it is impossible for what God has made alive to be killed, either by him or by anyone else. But he says, “I will kill and I will make alive.” Whom will I kill? Paul the betrayer, Paul the persecutor. “And I will make alive,” so that he becomes “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” If the wretched people from the heresies had understood these things, they would not keep throwing such words at us and saying: “Do you see how savage and inhuman the God of the law is? He says, ‘I will kill and I will make alive.’” Do you not see in the Scriptures a promise of the resurrection of the dead? Or do you not see the resurrection of the dead already being previewed in each one of us? “We were buried together” with Christ “through baptism,” and we have been raised together with him. So he begins with sterner words, yet necessary ones, such as “I will kill,” and then, having killed, “I will also make alive. I will strike, and I will heal.” For “the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and scourges every son whom he receives.” First he strikes, and after this he heals. For “he himself causes pain, and he restores again.”

^{16b} So it is here too: “I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to tear down and to destroy and to build and to plant.” Still, the first thing is for those evil things to be taken away from us. God cannot build on the site of an evil building. “For what share does righteousness have with lawlessness? What fellowship does light have with darkness?” Evil must be uprooted from its foundations. The building of evil must be consumed and removed from our soul, so that afterward the words of God may build and plant. I cannot understand what is written in any other way: “See, I have put my words in your mouth.” What do the words do? “Uproot, tear down and destroy.” Words uproot “nations”; words tear down kingdoms. [The text here is damaged; the sense seems to be that these are not only the worldly nations and kingdoms.] Think of what is uprooted by words, and what is torn down by words, in a way worthy of words that tear down and uproot. Is there not power even now in what is being said, if God gives it, according to the saying, “The Lord will give a word to those who proclaim the good news with great power”? Is it not a power that uproots any unbelief, any hypocrisy, any wickedness, any self-indulgence? Is it not a

power that tears down any idol-temple that has been built in the heart? Then, when that has been torn down, a temple of God may be built, and the glory of God may be found in the rebuilt temple. And it will become not a sacred grove but a planting, a paradise of God, where the temple of God is in Christ Jesus. To him belong the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 2

^{1a} “God did not make death, and he takes no pleasure in the destruction of the living. For he created all things so that they might exist, and the generations of the world are saving, and there is no deadly poison in them, nor a kingdom of Hades on earth.” Then, skipping ahead a little in the passage, I will say where death came in: “But through the envy of the devil death entered the world.” So whatever is best for us, God has made; but we ourselves have built evil and sins for ourselves. For this reason the opening of the reading here in the prophet speaks as if in perplexity to those who have in the soul a bitterness opposed to the sweetness God prepared for it: “How have you turned into bitterness, foreign vine?” It is as if he were saying: God did not make lameness, but made everyone sound of foot. So what has been the cause of those who are lame? God first of all made all the limbs healthy. So what has been the cause of someone’s suffering harm? In the same way the soul was made “in the image” not only in the first man but in every human being. For “Let us make man in our image and according to our likeness” reaches to all human beings.

^{1b} And just as in Adam there is something older, namely what most people understand as the “according to the image” that was later taken on by him, when through sin he put on “the image of the man of dust,” so in everyone the “according to the image of God” is older than the worse image. “Being sinners, we put on the image of the man of dust; let us put on,” by repenting, “the image of the heavenly man.” Still, creation came about in the image of the heavenly one. So here the word is perplexed and speaks to sinners in rebuke: “How have you turned into bitterness, you foreign vine? For I planted you a fruit-bearing vine, wholly true.” This was said in the passages before these, and I will repeat it briefly to persuade you that God planted the soul of man as a good vine, but each person, having turned, has become opposed to the purpose of the one who made him. “But I planted you a fruit-bearing vine, wholly” – not partly – “true.” It is not that one part is true and another false, but “I planted you a fruit-bearing vine, wholly true. How have

you turned?” That is: I made you a wholly true vine; how have you turned into bitterness and become a foreign vine?

2a After this, let us look at the words: “If you wash with soda and multiply herb for yourself, you are stained in your iniquities before me, says the Lord.” Did someone think that a soul which had sinned, by taking soda and washing with ordinary, physical soda, would be rid of the stain and rid of sin? Did someone suppose that by taking this herb that springs up from the earth, and washing and scrubbing with it, the soul would be cleansed? For here the word speaks to the vine that had turned to bitterness and become foreign: “If you wash with soda and multiply herb for yourself, you are stained in your iniquities before me, says the Lord.” But we must know that the word has every power. Just as it has the power of all Scripture, so the word has the power of every medicine, and it is the power of everything that cleanses, and it scrubs most thoroughly. “For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” Whatever you may say is needed, that is in the power of the word. So there is a certain word that is soda, and a certain word that is herb, which cleanses such filth when it is spoken. But not every sin is healed by such a word, whether the one that is soda or the one that is herb. There are sins that need neither soda nor herb. So to the soul that thinks its sins can be got rid of with soda and herb it is said: “If you wash with soda and multiply herb for yourself, you are stained before me in your iniquities, says the Lord.”

2b Consider wounds. Some are healed by a salve, others by oil, others need a bandage and are healed that way. But there are other wounds about which it is said: “There is no salve to apply, nor oil, nor bandages; but your land is desolate, your cities burned with fire.” So it is with sins. Some sins make the soul filthy, and for these sins a person needs a word that is soda, a word that is herb. But there are other sins that are not healed this way, for they are not even compared to dirt. Because the Lord knows the differences between sins, see how he speaks in Isaiah: “The Lord will wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and will cleanse the blood from their midst by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning.” Filth and blood: the filth by a spirit of judgment, the blood by a spirit of burning. If you have sinned, but not “to death,” you have been made filthy. “So the Lord will wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and will cleanse the blood from their midst.” Then there is the matching response: for “the filth,” a “spirit of

judgment,” and for “the blood,” a “spirit of burning.” And many of us, having sinned worse sins, need neither soda nor the multiplying of herb, but the spirit of burning.

³ This is why Jesus baptizes “in the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Perhaps I have only now found the explanation.) He does not baptize the same person “in the Holy Spirit and fire.” Rather, he baptizes the holy person “in the Holy Spirit.” But the person who, after believing and after being counted worthy of the Holy Spirit, has sinned again, he washes in “fire.” So the one baptized by Jesus “in the Holy Spirit and fire” is not the same person in both cases. Blessed, then, is the one baptized in the Holy Spirit who has no need of the baptism of fire. But three times wretched is the one who needs to be baptized with fire. Still, Jesus has both. For “a rod will come out of the root of Jesse, and a flower will rise from the root.” The “rod” is for those who are being punished, the “flower” for the righteous. In the same way “God is a consuming fire,” and “God is light”: a consuming fire for sinners, light for the righteous and holy. And “blessed is the one who has a share in the first resurrection,” the one who has kept the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Who, then, is the one saved in another resurrection? It is the one who needs the baptism of fire. When he comes to that fire, the fire tests him. If it finds wood, hay, [and stubble], it burns them up. So, since these things are being said, let us gather up as best we can the words of the Scriptures, store them in our heart, and try to live by them. Perhaps we may be able to become clean before our departure. Having made our works ready for the departure, we may go out with those good works, be received, and be saved in Christ Jesus. To him belong glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 3

¹ At the beginning of the passage that was read, the Lord says about Israel that he had not been a “desert” to them, nor “a land left unploughed.” Now who, coming to this place, would not stop to look into it and examine what the writing means? Granted: God has not become a desert in Israel, and he has not become an unploughed land in Israel. But has the Lord then become a desert to Israel today? Or is he now an unploughed land to them? And what of this: when he was not a desert or an unploughed land to Israel, was he a desert and an unploughed land to the nations? For if he is never a desert to anyone, and is never an unploughed land to anyone, what need was there for it to be said specially and particularly to Israel: “Have I been a desert to the

house of Israel, or a land left unploughed?” But we can go first to God’s general benefits, and then, after his general benefits, to his particular ones.

2 To no one is God a desert. He makes his sun rise on the evil and [the good]. To no one is he an unploughed land. He sends rain on [the righteous] and the unrighteous. How is he a desert, when he brings up the day and makes the night for rest? How is he a desert, when he makes the earth bear fruit? How is he a desert, when he orders each person’s life according to the soul, so that he may be rational, so that he may take up knowledge, so that his understanding may be exercised, and, as to the body, so that he may have “the senses” in good health? So, as regards the general account, God is a desert to no one. But as regards the particular account, I come to the affairs of Israel, and I say: he was neither a desert nor an unploughed land when he did the signs and wonders for the people in Egypt. And if there was ever a time when they were abandoned, it was as though he were a desert to them. He became that, though he himself was not a desert. Yet when he was not a desert or an unploughed land to Israel, then, according to the particular account, he was a desert and an unploughed land to the nations. But when he turned away from Israel and became a desert and an unploughed land to that Israel, then grace was poured out on the nations. And now Christ Jesus has become to us not a desert but fullness, not an unploughed land but one that bears fruit. For “many are the children of the desert, more than of the woman who has the husband.” And he threatens those to whom he has not become a desert or an unploughed land, saying: I have not been to you a “desert” or “an unploughed land,” but you have said: “We will not be ruled; we will not come to you any more.” Did the sons of Israel say, in a desperate frame of mind, as the words suggest: “We will not be ruled”?

HOMILY 4

1a The wording of the passage that was read has something obscure in it. Let us first work out what it means. After that, if God allows, we will learn his hidden purpose in it. He wants us to know, then, that, as it is written in the books of Kingdoms, in the days of Rehoboam the people were divided into two kingdoms. Ten tribes came under Jeroboam, and two tribes under Rehoboam. Those under Jeroboam were called Israel, and those under Rehoboam were called Judah. As far as the history goes, this division of the people has lasted until now. We know of no history in which Israel and Judah were brought together again as one. Israel sinned first, and sinned more: the Israel

under Jeroboam and his successors. They sinned so much more than Judah that Providence condemned them to be taken captive to the Assyrians, and, as the Scripture says, “until today.” After this the sons of Judah also sinned, and they were condemned to captivity in Babylon. That was not “until today,” as with Israel, but for “seventy years.” Jeremiah prophesied about those years, and Daniel also recalled them. If we understand these things as applying to the people of that time, see whether the prophet’s words do not show something like this. He accuses Israel of its sins, in a manner of speaking. He says that although Israel had committed so many sins, the assembly of Judah heard of their failures, and how I made them go into captivity, [and was not instructed, but added to its sins.]

1b So because of this addition of sins, when Judah’s sins were compared with those of Israel, righteousness was found in Israel rather than in Judah. Then, after this, the prophet is commanded to prophesy, as though Judah were worse than Israel, so that after their sins Judah might turn back. After the prophecy to Israel, which commanded it to turn back, the prophet prophesies that Israel and Judah will one day come together, and that there will someday be one kingdom of both. Let anyone who cares about the readings take the words of today’s whole reading, and then he will see that these meanings are made plain. “And the Lord said to me in the days of Josiah the king: Have you seen what the dwelling of Israel did to me?” Notice: not Judah, but Israel first. “It went up on every high mountain and under every leafy tree, and played the prostitute there. And after it had done all this, I said: Turn back to me. And it did not turn back. And she saw its faithlessness”, that is, the assembly of Israel, “the faithless Judah. And I saw”, those from Judah, “that in all the things in which the dwelling of Israel committed adultery, I also sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce.” Judah ought to have been instructed by this. For I sent Israel away, the assembly of Israel; I cast them out to the Assyrians, “and I gave her a certificate of divorce into her hands.” “And faithless Judah was not afraid.”

1c After all that I did to Israel, sending it away and giving it a certificate of divorce, the assembly of Judah ought to have been instructed by what those others suffered. But they not only were not instructed; they added to their sins. So the sins of the assembly of Israel, compared with the sins of the assembly of Judah, seem to be righteousness. “And I gave her a certificate of divorce into her hands. And faithless Judah, her sister, was not afraid, and

she went and played the prostitute, she too. And her prostitution came to nothing, and she committed adultery with the wood and the stone. And in all this faithless Judah did not turn back to me with her whole heart, but in falsehood.” She was not ashamed before me because of what I had done to Israel, so that she might turn back completely. She ought to have turned back in truth, but she turned back in falsehood. “And in all this faithless Judah did not turn back to me with her whole heart, but in falsehood. And the Lord said to me: Israel has justified her soul compared with faithless Judah.” The sins of Israel, compared with the failures of Judah, became a justification of the soul of the assembly of Israel.

2a “Go, then, and read these words toward the north.” If the saying is understood, let us see what it means to show by this. The calling of the nations began from the fall of Israel. When the apostles preached in the synagogues of the Jews, they said, “The word of salvation was sent out to you. Since you judge yourselves unworthy, see, we turn to the [nations].” The apostle also, knowing what he knows about these people, says, “By their transgression salvation has come to the nations, to make them jealous.” So the many sins of that people caused them to be abandoned. They also brought us to the hope of the [promise], we who were [strangers to] the covenants and aliens from the [commonwealth]. For how could I, a foreigner, wherever I came from, to the so-called holy land, now be discussing the promises of God? How could I believe in the God of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by God’s grace receive Jesus Christ, [announced] by the prophets? If you understand these two peoples, the one from Israel and the one from the nations, then consider with me the exile of Israel, and understand that it was written about that people of Israel: “I sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce.” For God sent that people away and gave them a certificate of divorce.

2b This is like the case of married people. The law of Moses says that if a wife was displeasing to her husband, a “certificate of divorce” was drawn up by the husband and the wife was sent away. The man who had sent away his first wife because she seemed to have behaved shamefully was then permitted to marry another woman. In the same way, see those people receiving a certificate of divorce. And because they received the certificate of divorce, they were completely abandoned. For where are prophets among them any longer? Where are signs among them any longer? Where is the appearing of God? Where is the worship, the temple, the sacrifices? They were thrown out

of their own place. So he gave Israel “a certificate of divorce.” Then we are Judah. (We are called Judah because of the Savior who rose from Judah, for it is plain that our Lord has risen from Judah.) We turned to the Lord. Yet our latter end, [if] it is not already so, seems about to become like theirs, if not indeed worse.

³ That our own affairs will be like this at the close of this age is clear from what the Savior said in the gospel. There he says, “Because lawlessness is multiplied, the love of the many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” And he says, “[The deceiver] will do signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” Our situation will be such that the Savior says of his own coming, as though a faithful person would hardly be found among so many churches, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find faith on the earth?” And truly, if we judge matters by the truth and not by crowds, and judge them by the choice of the heart and not by seeing many gathered together, we will see that we are not faithful now. But they were faithful then, when the noble martyrdoms were taking place. We would escort the martyrs from the burial grounds and come to the assemblies, and the whole church came without being distressed. The catechumens were taught at the martyrdoms and at the deaths of those who confessed the truth “to death,” “not frightened” or shaken before “the living God.” We know that in those days people also saw extraordinary signs and wonders. Then the faithful were few, but they were truly faithful, walking the narrow and hard road that leads “to life.” But now we have become many. Yet it is impossible for many to be elect, for Jesus who said it does not lie: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Out of the multitude of those who [profess] reverence for God, very few reach God’s election and blessedness.

^{4a} So when he says, “First I sent Israel away because of their sins, and I sent them off into exile, but Judah heard what happened to Israel and did not turn back,” he is speaking about our sins. The things that happened to Israel are read aloud, and the failures of that people, and we ought to be afraid. “If he did not spare the natural branches, how much less will he spare you?” If the kind and loving God did not spare those who boasted of being the “good olive tree,” those rooted in “the root” of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but cut them off, how much less will he spare us! For God is not kind without also being severe, nor severe without also being kind. If he were only kind and not severe, we would despise “his kindness” all the more.

If he were severe and not kind, we might perhaps despair over our sins. As it is, he is God, and so he is both kind and severe. We human beings need his kindness when we repent, but we need his severity when we stay in our sins. So he speaks to us through the prophets and says, “Have you seen what the dwelling of Israel did to me?” Understand by Israel that people of old. “She went up on every high mountain and under every shady tree.”

^{4b} Suppose you see the Pharisee going up into the temple in his arrogance. He does not beat his breast and does not grieve over his own evils. Instead he says, “I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give a tenth of all I have.” You will see that he has gone up “on every high mountain” in a blameworthy way. He loved loftiness of mind, and in his boasting and pride he loved every high hill. And he has come to be “under every tree” that is not fruitful but “shady like a grove.” A grove tree is one thing, and a fruit tree is another. When people plant trees for groves, they do not plant the ones that bear fruit, not a fig tree or a vine, but only trees without fruit, for the sake of enjoyment. You will find the teachings of those who hold other doctrines to be like that: the beauty of their persuasive arguments does not turn their hearers back to God. So when someone gives himself over to such teachings, he has gone “under every grove-like tree.” The text did not say “every tree” and then stop. Nor did it add “every fruit-bearing tree.” It said, “under every shady, grove-like tree.” For this reason you will understand why the lawgiver says, “You shall not plant any tree beside the altar of the Lord your God, and you shall not make a grove.” You see, even the very name of the grove has been forbidden.

^{5a} “And she committed fornication there. And after she had committed all this fornication, I said: Return to me. But she did not return, and unfaithful Judah saw her unfaithfulness.” We too are rebuked, I mean we who sin and do not keep God’s covenants. We do not see that those people lost the covenant, though they were well born, descended from Abraham, and had received the promise. We ought therefore to reckon that they fell away from the blessings and the promises, and that being descended from the fathers did them no good. How much more shall we be abandoned if we sin! The Savior says to them, “If you were children of Abraham, you would be doing the works of Abraham.” And John says again, “Do not begin to say among yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I tell you that God is able to

raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” By stones he hints at us, who have a heart of stone and are hardened against the truth. And truly God has raised up children to Abraham from the stones, if we remain in that childbearing and keep the spirit of [the adoption?]. So “her unfaithfulness” is that of the dwelling of Israel, and “unfaithful Judah” is the one who did not keep the covenants with God. And Judah saw, concerning everything for which that people was abandoned (for we, who are Judah, see all this if we read the Scripture), that for the things in which the dwelling of Israel committed adultery, God sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce. This was so that we might be instructed by what he did to them. He judged them according to their sins, abandoned them, and handed them over to captivity, to slaughter, and to their enemies. From these things we ought to turn back, and each of us ought to reckon that if God did not spare the natural branches, how much more will he not spare us. If he thus cast out those who came from the fathers when they became sinners, what shall we suffer, we who were called from the nations? We have reckoned none of this, though we were called so that that people might be provoked to jealousy when they see the slave honored and see the low-born one come forward.

^{5b} But if they suffered so much, how much more shall we be abandoned if we sin? “For the things in which the dwelling of Israel committed adultery, I sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce into her hands. And unfaithful Judah was not afraid.” God means what he has done to the dwelling of Israel, that “I sent her away and gave her a certificate of divorce.” Judah “was not afraid” because of what had happened to them. Consider someone who enters the house of a master and has only recently been bought. He asks which of the earlier servants the master honored and why, and which of the servants he dishonored and why. When he has understood this, if he wants to stay in the master’s house, he takes care not to fall into what the earlier servants did, who sinned, were thrown out, and were handed over to punishment. Then, having learned what the earlier servants did who won approval, and for what kind of conduct they obtained freedom, he strives to imitate them. So it is with us. We were not servants of God but of idols and demons, Gentiles, and only yesterday and the day before we came to God. Let us read the Scripture. Let us see who was justified and who was condemned. Let us imitate those who were justified. Let us take care not to fall into the things

that those who were taken captive fell into, those who were cast out from God.

6 “And unfaithful Judah was not afraid, but went and played the harlot, even she herself.” Israel had played the harlot first; afterward Judah played the harlot too. “And her harlotry came to nothing, and she committed adultery with the wood and the stone.” When we sin, we do nothing other than become stone-hearted and commit adultery with “the stone.” When we sin and play the harlot “under every shady tree,” we too commit adultery with the wood. “And unfaithful Judah did not turn to me with her whole heart, but in falsehood.” If we have turned to God, but only in part, we are charged with not having turned “with the whole heart.” So “unfaithful Judah did not turn to me with her whole heart.” He did not say, “Unfaithful Judah turned, and stood firm.” He said, “Unfaithful Judah did not turn to me with her whole heart, but” turned “in falsehood.” What, then, is true turning? It is to read the ancient writings, to know those who were justified, and to imitate them. It is to read those writings and see those who were blamed, and to guard ourselves against falling under the same blame. It is to read the books of the new covenant, the words of the apostles, and after reading, to write all these things on the heart and to live by them. Then no bill of divorce will be given to us as well, but we shall be able to come to the holy inheritance. And when the fullness of the Gentiles has been saved, Israel will then be able to enter. For if the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then all Israel will be saved, “and there will be one flock, one shepherd,” teaching us to glorify the almighty God in Christ Jesus himself, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 5

1a It is written plainly in the Acts of the Apostles that the apostles first went into the Jewish synagogue. They announced to the Jews, as to kinsmen through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, what was written about the coming of Jesus Christ. But when those people did not accept what was said, and others had to become the hearers of the message, then the apostles made their defense to the Jews and left them. For it is written: “It was necessary that the word of God be announced to you first; but since you judge yourselves unworthy, look, we turn to the Gentiles.” What is said plainly in the Acts of the Apostles has been said in effect in many places by the prophets too. The Holy Spirit speaks first and foremost to those from that people. But if at some

point, after saying much, he is not listened to, he prophesies the word that is proclaimed to the Gentiles. This has also happened at the beginning of today's reading. Before it, these words are spoken to those from Israel: "Even if you call me Father, you will not turn away from me. Yet as a woman is faithless to the man who lives with her, so the house of Israel has been faithless to me, says the Lord." When these things had first been said about Israel, and the sons of Israel had heard that "they had done wrong in their ways and forgotten their holy God," then the Holy Spirit moves the word on to us who are from the Gentiles and says: "Turn back, sons who turn back, and I will heal your fractures."

^{1b} For we are the ones full of fractures, each one of us might say, even if now he has been cleansed and healed of the fractures. "For we too were foolish, foolish, going astray, slaves to desires and many varied pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness and love for humanity of our Savior God appeared, through the washing of rebirth he poured out his mercy upon us." I will try to make that apostolic saying clearer, though I have mentioned it once already. For he did not say, "We were once foolish, disobedient," as though speaking of others. Paul, the apostle, who was from Israel, who had become "blameless in the righteousness that is in the law," says: "For we too were once (those from Israel) disobedient, foolish." Not only were those from the Gentiles foolish, and not only were those from the Gentiles disobedient, and not only were they sinners. We too, who had been taught the law, were like that before the coming of Christ. So after what has been said to Israel, these words are spoken to us who are from the Gentiles: "Turn back, sons who turn back, and I will heal your fractures."

^{2a} But someone will object: "This was said to Israel, and you are dragging it over to the Gentiles." We want to show that when God wishes to speak to Israel about repentance, he does not wait a long while but adds the name of Israel at once. So the very next words are: "If Israel turns back to me, says the Lord, he will indeed turn back; and if he removes his abominations from his mouth, and is reverent before my face, and swears, 'As the Lord lives,' in truth and in judgment and in righteousness, then the nations will bless themselves in him." So the earlier words were spoken to those from the Gentiles. For when the full number of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved, according to what the apostle says in the letter to the Romans.

Notice how God urges us who are turning to turn completely. He promises that if we turn to him, “turning back,” he will heal our “fractures” through Jesus Christ. And we answer, as people who do not hesitate or delay over our salvation the way that Israel did: “Here we are; we shall be yours.” God said, “Turn back, sons who are turning back, and I will heal your fractures.” And those from the Gentiles say, “We shall be your servants.” Yet we were not yours before. We belonged to demons, and we found ourselves under opposing powers. For when the Most High divided the nations, we did not become your portion, nor the measured share of your inheritance with the people of Jacob. We became the portions of others. Even so, we who were once those portions hear you say to us, “Turn back, sons who are turning back, and I will heal your fractures,” and we answer, “Here we are.” This is what we were waiting for, the calling. We do not decline when we are called, as those others were called and declined.

^{2b} For we have it in the parables of the gospel that when some were invited first, one said, “Hold me excused, I have married a wife,” and another said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going to try them out; hold me excused.” We from the Gentiles are not like that: we are called, and we do not decline. Why? What field would we need to be busy with? What wise woman? What else should we be occupied with? So God has said to us, “Turn back, sons who are turning back, and I will heal your fractures.” And when we see our own fractures and the promise of healing, we answer at once and say, “Here we are; we shall be yours, because you are the Lord our God.” Having heard, then, and having said “We shall be yours,” let us remember that we made a promise to God when we said to him, “We shall be yours.” And having said “We shall be yours,” let us not become anyone else’s. Let us not belong to a spirit of anger, or a spirit of grief, or a spirit of desire. Let us not belong to the devil or to his angels. Rather, having been called and having said, “Here we are; we shall be yours,” let us show by our works that we have become his and have given ourselves to no one but him. And we say, “Because you are the Lord our God.” For we confess no other god. It is not the belly, as the gluttons do, “whose god is the belly.” It is not silver, as the lovers of money do, and not greed, which is idolatry. We do not deify or make gods of anything else that the many make gods of. For us the God over all, the one who is over all and through all and in all, is God. And since we are

bound to God by love, for love glues us to God, we say, "Here we are; we shall be yours, because you are the Lord our God."

^{3a} Then, having condemned our former evils, we speak as people who are turning back. There was a time when we thought the idols great and lofty. We bowed down to them and thought the things we served were wonderful. Now we have judged that all of that was false and was nothing at all. So we say as we turn: "Truly the hills were for a lie." We say it because we have condemned the lofty things we once held and the wonders we once admired. Perhaps, if we take the trouble, we will find a difference between the hills and the mountains among the nations. Those who said, "Behold, here we are, we will be yours, for you are the Lord our God," have left them behind and accuse them of being false, both hills and mountains. What, then, is the difference between the mountains and the hills among the nations? Having condemned them, we say, "Truly the hills were for a lie, and so was the power of the mountains." This is what we say when we condemn our former ways. Among the nations, some of the things they worship are worshipped as gods and some as heroes. For they themselves admit that some of them were once human beings and were made gods. They worship Heracles, not as a god who was born a god, but as one changed from a man into a god. They worship Asclepius as one who was changed from a man into a god because of his virtue. But when they worship the fathers of these, whom they call gods, they do not worship them as men who were changed into gods. As those people suppose, these have been gods from the beginning.

^{3b} So the mountains, and "the power of the mountains," will be those the nations have thought to be gods from the beginning. Those they now think to be gods, but who were formerly human beings, are "the hills." Having come to know both ranks of the things worshipped, we say, "Truly the hills were for a lie, and so was the power of the mountains." For those who serve them do not suppose that these things are false. So they think the oracles and the healings are true healings. They do not see the difference in "all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, with every deceit of wickedness for those who are perishing." [The text is corrupt at this point; a few words are lost or garbled in the Greek, and the Greek then runs on into a reference to "the fullness of the nations" coming in and "all Israel" being saved, and to Christ Jesus.] The things Christ Jesus did were signs of truth. Before him, what Moses did was a power of truth. But what the Egyptians did were signs

and wonders too, yet of falsehood. So also with what Simon the magician did after Jesus' time. He led the nation of Samaria astray, and he was thought to be the power of God. These too were signs and wonders of falsehood. So when we condemn those things, we who have condemned them say, "Truly the hills were for a lie, and so was the power of the mountains."

⁴Next, we who are from the Gentiles know that "by their transgression we received the way of salvation," and that Israel has been thrown out until our fullness comes in. We also know that if "the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, after this all Israel will be saved." That is why we say first, "Truly the hills were for a lie, and the power of the mountains." Second, we speak about Israel after the fullness of the [Gentiles]: "Yet the salvation of Israel is through the Lord our God." Since we have now mentioned the apostle's saying, that salvation has come to the Gentiles through the transgression by which Israel fell, let us unfold what these passages say. The saying goes on: when "the fullness of the Gentiles comes in," Israel remains outside, and after that fullness has come in, "then all Israel will be saved." There was an Israel that was being saved. The great mass of Israel fell away, but "a remnant according to the election of grace came to be." It was about this remnant that the saying was spoken in a hidden way "in Elijah": "I have left for myself seven thousand men, who did not bend the knee to Baal." The apostle explains this remnant when he says, "So then, in the present time also, a remnant according to the election of grace has come to be." So there is an Israel being saved, even if only a remnant, while the rest of Israel is left behind. If you are able, carry these two groups over for me to those from the Gentiles. He did not say, "When all the Gentiles are saved, then all Israel will be saved." He said, "When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in." So [the saved Israel] comes after "the fullness of the Gentiles," not after all the Gentiles without exception. If anyone is able, let him go further. Just as he found Israel being saved after the fullness of the Gentiles, let him consider when all will serve God under one yoke, as it is said [in the prophet], with sacrifices coming from the ends of Ethiopia. That is the time when, as the sixty-seventh Psalm says, "Ethiopia will hasten to stretch out her hand to God." And the word commands the kingdoms "of the earth," saying, "Sing to the Lord, sing psalms to the God of Jacob."

⁵So we who are from the Gentiles speak about ourselves, repenting of the falsehoods we used to think were true: "Truly the hills were for a lie, and the

power of the mountains.” About the Israel that will be saved after us we say: “Yet the salvation of the house of Israel is through the Lord our God.” Then we confess the sins in which our fathers lived, and we ourselves too, serving idols, and we say: “But shame has consumed the labors of our fathers from their youth, their sheep and their oxen, their sons and their daughters.” “Shame has consumed the labors of our fathers,” and the words that follow. So if the wretched labor and false work of the fathers is going to be consumed, shame must come. Before shame, the labor of the fathers is not consumed, nor are the things that follow. Therefore let us consider the differences among sinners. There are people who sin and are not ashamed. They feel no embarrassment over their sins and do not blush. Such are those who have become callous and have handed themselves over to every kind of licentiousness and uncleanness. [The text here is unclear.] Among the Gentiles, for example, people sometimes list their fornications and adulteries as if they were heroic achievements. They are not even embarrassed to admit that they have done such things, and they do not call them sins. As long as they are not ashamed, their labors are not consumed, and their sins are not consumed. The beginning of good things is for someone to be ashamed of what he was not ashamed of before. For this reason I do not take it as a curse when the prophets say, “Let all who hate Zion be ashamed and turned back.” The prophet is praying that those who feel nothing about their shameful deeds will come to a sense of them. Then, having been ashamed, they will be able to consume their labors and their sins.

6 The irrational impulses of our fathers he called “sheep” and “calves.” For not everything irrational is praiseworthy. Some of it is blameworthy, like the sheep of the fathers who sinned. But some irrational things are praiseworthy, for example: “My sheep hear my voice.” These too were sheep, but sheep to whom we have a counterpart in reason, since we have the good shepherd in our souls. For when the Savior says, “I am the good shepherd,” I do not hear it only as everyone hears it, that he is the shepherd of those who believe (and that is sound and true). I must also have Christ within me, in my own soul: the good shepherd within me. He shepherds the irrational impulses in me, so that they no longer go out to pasture wherever they happen to go. Led by the shepherd, those that were once strangers to him become his own. For this reason, if the shepherd is in me, he now rules over my

senses. They are no longer under an alien mind, or under Pharaoh, or under Nebuchadnezzar, but under the good shepherd.

7 “Shame, then, consumed the labors of our fathers from their youth, their sheep and their oxen.” There is something in us that works the land, and it works it either badly or well; we speak of “badly” or “well” for the one who farms. If it farms badly, there is a labor of the fathers that is consumed by their shame. But if it farms well, it is not the fathers’ labor [in that sense]; it is a labor from which the firstborn are brought up to the altar of God. “Their sons and their daughters,” these people say. Whose sons and daughters? “Of the fathers.” The sons are consumed by their shame. As we have often said, these are the offspring of the soul: thoughts are the sons, and the works and actions done through the body are the daughters. Since there are some wretched thoughts, such as the Gentiles thought, and also wretched deeds, therefore sons and daughters are consumed by those who made them, if shame comes upon them over their sins. May we never produce sons and daughters for that kind of consuming by shame.

8a After this, those who are confessing say, “We lay down in our shame.” And after that they say, “and our dishonor covered us.” We have often spoken about the veil that lies over the face of those who do not turn to the Lord. Because of that veil, “whenever Moses is read,” the sinner does not understand him, for “a veil lies over his heart.” Because of that veil, when the old covenant is read, the hearer will not understand. Because of that veil the gospel too is hidden for those who are perishing. So we were saying about the veil that shame is the veil. As long as we have “the works of shame,” clearly we have the veil, according to what is said somewhere in the forty-third Psalm: “and the shame of my face covered me.” I put this beside it because the person who has no works of shame has no veil. Paul was like that when he said, “But we all, with unveiled face, behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.” So Paul has an unveiled face, for he has no works of shame. Whoever is not like Paul has a veiled face. So just as it is said there, in the forty-third Psalm, “the shame of my face covered me,” in the same way it is said here: “our dishonor covered us.” As long as we do works of dishonor, we have a veil lying on our heart. If we want to put away the veil that comes from dishonor, let us come to the works of honor. Let us understand what was said by the Savior, “that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father,” and

let us also understand what is said in the apostle: "Through the breaking of the law you dishonor God."

^{8b} The righteous person, as he honors the Father, honors the Son. Dishonor, when I dishonor the Son (this is the very thing by which I dishonor the Father or the Son), becomes a covering over my face, and I say, "And our dishonor covered us." So then, now that we understand the veil that lies on us from works of shame, from our deeds, let us take the veil away, let us take it away. It is up to us to have the veil removed; it is up to no one else. For "when Moses turned to the Lord, the veil was taken away." Do you see how Moses is sometimes taken to stand for the people? As long as he did not turn to the Lord, being a symbol of the people who do not turn to the Lord, he had a veil lying over his face. But when he turned to the Lord, becoming a symbol of those who turn to the Lord, then "the veil was taken away." And it was not as though God commanded him, "Put on the veil" (for the Lord did not say to Moses, "Put on the veil"). Rather, Moses saw that the people could not look at his glory, and then he put "the veil over his face." And he did not wait for God to say, "Take off the veil," whenever he turned to the Lord.

⁹ This has been written so that you also, when you put the veil on your face through works of dishonor and shame, may yourself bring about the removal of the veil. If you turn to the Lord, then you take the veil away, and you will no longer say, "Our dishonor covered us." For example, when anger against someone lies on our soul, a veil lies over our face. For this reason, if we want to say in prayer, "The light of your face has been marked upon us, Lord," let us take away the veil and do what the apostle says: "I want the men, then, to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger and disputing." If we remove anger, we have removed the veil, and so too if we remove all the passions. But as long as these things are in our mind, in our reasoning, the veil and the dishonor lie over the inner face, our governing faculty, so that we do not see the glory of God shining. It is not God who hides his glory from us; it is we who, because of wickedness, put the veil on the governing faculty.

¹⁰ "Because we have sinned before our God, we and our fathers." I wish that we too would speak as these people do, in the person the prophet takes on for them. "We have sinned." "We have sinned" is not the same as "we are sinning." Let the one who is still in sin not say "we have sinned." Let the one

who has sinned before, and has repented thoroughly, say “we have sinned.” So it is written in Daniel, a confession of people who no longer sin, saying, “We have sinned, we have acted lawlessly.” And in the Psalms the prophet says, “Do not remember our ancient lawless deeds.” So let us also confess our sins. I wish they were not those of yesterday or of three days ago. I wish that our confession would be about sins committed fifteen years before, because we have had no sin since then for fifteen years. But if we sinned yesterday, we are not yet trustworthy when we confess our sins, and there is no room yet for these sins of ours to be wiped out. “Because we have sinned, we and our fathers, from our youth until this day.” Let the earlier remarks be taken otherwise, as teaching about the best way of confessing. But these words are an accusation of having sinned for a long time. “From our youth,” he says, “until this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.” We have sinned, and we have not obeyed up to the present. Then, having turned and having the beginning of conversion, they say, “We have sinned, and we have not obeyed.” For we do not obey immediately, the moment we wish to obey. Time is still needed. As with wounds there is time needed for healing, so with conversion there is time needed to turn to God completely and purely.

¹¹ After this God says about Israel: “If Israel turns back to me, says the Lord, he will indeed be turned back.” That is, if he turns back completely, he will be turned back in earnest, and not merely if he has, so to speak, begun to turn. Then he says: “And if he removes his abominations from his mouth, and takes care before my face, and swears, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth and in judgment and in righteousness, then the nations will bless themselves in him.” If they do these things, “the nations will bless themselves in him.” And what must they do, so that the nations will bless themselves in him? “If he removes his abominations from his mouth.” What does it mean to remove abominations from the mouth? Whatever evil we speak is an abomination in our mouth. So let us remove the abominations from our mouth: let us take away slander, empty words, idle words, the kind that will bring charges against us “in the day of judgment; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” If, then, we want this to come true for us, “and the nations will bless themselves in him, and in him they will praise God in Jerusalem,” let us do what was said at the beginning. And what is the first thing? To remove “the abominations from our mouth.” Next comes “you will take care before my face.” Let us do this second thing,

and not carelessly, merely to be cautious. For there can be a caution that does not come from the face of God. Those who fear without understanding, who simply set themselves to be afraid, are not taking care before the face of God. But those who take care with understanding are those who always look at, and picture to themselves, “the face of God set against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.” These are the ones who take care before the face of God.

12 “If he removes his abominations from his mouth, and takes care before my face, and swears, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth and in judgment and in righteousness.” Let us who swear oaths examine ourselves, and see how we swear not in judgment but without judgment, so that our oaths come from habit rather than from judgment. We get carried away, and the word exposes this when it says: “And if he swears, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth and in judgment and in righteousness.” We know that in the Gospel the Lord said to the disciples: “But I say to you, do not swear at all.” Let us look at this saying of Jeremiah as well, and if God grants it, we will examine the two together. For perhaps a person must first swear “in truth and in judgment and in righteousness,” so that afterward, having made progress, he may become worthy not to swear at all, but to have a “yes” that needs no witnesses to show that it is yes, and a “no” that needs no witnesses to show that it is truly no. “And if he swears, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth.” In the one who swears I look first for no falsehood but truth, so that he swears with truth. But we, wretched as we are, even swear falsely. Yet suppose it is “with truth”: even so the oath is not rightly made unless it is also “in judgment.” Grant that I swear out of habit: then I am not swearing “in judgment.” If it were necessary to bring the God of the universe, and his Christ, into such an oath for this matter, how great would the matter have to be before I would bend my knees and swear? Perhaps I might do it at some time, to cure the unbelief that has arisen in some people about my word. But if I swear just as it happens, I would sin. “If he swears, then, ‘As the Lord lives,’ with truth and in judgment,” not without judgment, “and in righteousness,” not unjustly, “then the nations will bless themselves in him.” He has joined both together, those from the nations and Israel. He has spoken about the nations, and he has spoken about Israel too.

13a The prophet goes on: “And the nations will bless themselves in him, and in him they will praise God in Jerusalem. For thus says the Lord to the

men of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem.” He has spoken to those from the nations, and he has spoken to those from Israel; now he speaks to those from Judah. I remember what was said earlier about the figurative meanings of Judah and of those who live in Jerusalem. For we live in Jerusalem, if God grants it. “Where the treasure is, there the heart is also.” If we store up treasure in heaven, we have our heart in the Jerusalem above, of which the apostle says, “But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother, as it is written,” and so on. “Thus,” then, “says the Lord to the men of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem: Break up fresh ground for yourselves, and do not sow among thorns.” This word is spoken above all to teachers, so that they do not entrust what they say to their hearers before they have made fresh ground in their souls. For when people “put their hand to the plow” and make fresh ground in their souls, and those who hear them are “good and fine soil,” then they sow, and not among thorns. But suppose someone takes the holy seeds before the plow, before fresh ground has been made in the ruling part of the hearers. The seeds are the word about the Father, the word about the Son, the word about the Holy Spirit, the word about the resurrection, the word about punishment, the word about rest, the word about the law, about the prophets, and in short about each of the things written. If he sows them, he breaks the commandment that says first, “Break up fresh ground for yourselves,” and second, “do not sow among thorns.” But one of the hearers will say: “I am not a teacher; I am not subject to this commandment.” You too must become a farmer of yourself, and not sow among thorns. Make fresh ground for me of the field that the God of the universe has entrusted to you. Look carefully at the field. See where the thorns are: where “the cares of life and the deceitfulness of wealth and the love of pleasure” are.

^{13b} When you have seen the thorns in your soul, look for the rational plow, of which Jesus says, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Seek it and find it. Then gather from the Scriptures the clean working oxen, plow, and break up the ground. So that it may no longer be old, make it new. “Having put off the old man with his practices and put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge,” you will make fresh ground for yourself. When you have made the fresh ground, take seeds from those who teach. Take seeds from the law, take them from the prophets, from the writings of the gospels, and from the

words of the apostles. Having taken these seeds, sow your soul through remembering and meditation. These seeds will seem to spring up on their own. But in truth they will not spring up of themselves after you have remembered them; God will make them grow. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." And if anyone has been able to understand the Scriptures, he has made fresh ground, and having made fresh ground he has sown, and not among thorns. God arranges that these seeds do not suddenly become an ear of grain. Rather, as in the Gospel according to Mark, "first the blade, then the ear, then" the full grain. When it is ready for harvest, those who are sent out to reap will come. When it is ready for harvest, they will come to those to whom the word says, "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, that they are already white for harvest." So he says to us: "Break up fresh ground for yourselves, and do not sow among thorns." But suppose that before you have cleansed your soul, while you still have thorns, you approach a teacher, whether he is truly able or only thought to be, or you ask for lessons and spiritual seeds. Then you break the commandment that says, "Do not sow among thorns."

^{14a} Next it says: "Be circumcised to your God; circumcise the foreskin of your heart." "Be circumcised to your God." The words "to your God" are added of necessity. You will understand it from the example we can see with our senses. I mean that not only those of the circumcision under the law of Moses are circumcised, but many others as well. The priests of the Egyptians are circumcised to idols. But that circumcision belongs to idols, and it is not a circumcision done to God. The circumcision of the Jews, perhaps, but certainly at that time, was done to God. So if the word says, "Be circumcised to your God," once you have grasped the plain sense, go on to the figurative meaning. There you will find how, among those who are circumcised in the figurative sense (so that some of them might even say, "We are the circumcision"), some are circumcised to God, while others are circumcised, but not to God. For there are other teachings besides the teaching of the truth, besides the teaching of the church. Those who practice philosophy have their habits and their heart circumcised, so to speak; they discipline themselves. So do those from the heresies, and a circumcision comes about for them. But it is a circumcision, and not to God. For among them the circumcision comes about by a false teaching.

14b But when you share in the rule of the church and in the purpose of sound teaching, you are not merely circumcised, you are circumcised “to God.” “Be circumcised,” then, to your God, and circumcise the foreskin of your heart. Who would not pass over this as plain? So there is such a thing as a foreskin of the heart, and it must be circumcised. Whoever examines the word carefully will look into this passage for questions like these: the foreskin is born with a person, while circumcision is acquired, and circumcision removes what came with birth. If, then, the word commands us to remove “the foreskin of the heart,” something must have been born together with the heart, which it calls a foreskin, and which must be removed so that someone is circumcised in “the foreskin of the heart.” Suppose someone understands the saying, “We were by nature children of wrath, like the rest.” Suppose someone understands “the body of humiliation” in which we were born. Suppose someone understands the saying, “No one is clean from filth, not even if his life were one day; his months are numbered.” He will see how we were born with uncleanness and with a foreskin of our heart.

15a To put it by a simpler example, one that can lead you to see “the foreskin of the heart,” I will point out that in the earliest stage of life false opinions inevitably arise in the soul. For it is not possible for a person to receive true doctrines from the beginning. The divine Word made provision for history and for the Scripture according to the letter, so that it might first nourish the one born to Abraham according to the flesh with words that belong to the flesh. [The text is corrupt here: it seems to say that he might first be born of the slave woman] so that after him the son of the free woman, the one born through the promise, might be able to be born. [Corrupt: “why this was taken up”] The foreskin of the heart can be understood as what comes before circumcision. We therefore need to receive the word that cleanses our doctrines and removes everything that has arisen in us through false opinion. This is what it means to put off the foreskin of our heart. For if the heart, in our case, is the ruling part, where thoughts are, from which “the evil reasonings” come out, then the one who removes the evil reasonings removes “the foreskin of the heart.” The one who puts away false opinion has been circumcised in “the foreskin of his heart.” He becomes a man of Judah and a dweller in Jerusalem, being circumcised.

15b But if someone does not put away “the foreskin of his heart,” let us see what the word threatens him with: “Lest my anger go out like fire and burn,

and there be no one to quench it.” So the anger of the Lord goes out like fire against those who have not been circumcised to God, against those who have not put away “the foreskin of their heart.” “And there will be no one to quench it, because of the wickedness of their practices.” That fire has as its fuel the wickedness of our practices. Where there is no wickedness of practices, the fire has nothing to feed on. And that the fuel of that fire is the wickedness of our practices, hear the prophet say: “And there will be no one to quench it, because of the wickedness of your practices.” “Announce it in Judah, and let it be heard in Jerusalem. Speak, announce, sound the trumpet over the land, and cry out loudly.” He means: say these things that are being announced to those of the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Christ. “For it is plain that our Saviour has risen from Judah.”

^{16a} “Sound the trumpet over the land.” The trumpet stands for the lofty word that wakes up the hearer. It prepares him for the struggle against the passions and against the working of the opposing powers. It also prepares him for the heavenly feasts. (The trumpet is mentioned for both of these purposes.) In the book of Numbers, a word of this kind is a trumpet. For example, the word commands me, and anyone else to whom it is given (it is given to the one who wishes and who searches out the mind of the Scriptures), to make “silver trumpets, hammered out.” So the word says: “Sound the trumpet over the land, and cry out loudly. Say: Gather together, and let us go into the fortified cities.” The word of God does not want us to enter an unwallled city, but [the city] of the living God, the church, fortified by the [power] of the word. (For he is the wall.) It is in the seventeenth Psalm, that God is also a wall. “Gather your things and flee to Zion.” All of you who are outside Zion, “gather your things and flee to Zion. Hurry, do not stand still.” You who are making progress, hurry to the Watchtower, “for I am bringing evils from the north, and a great destruction.” These evils are brought “from the north,” the north of the adversary, as has often been said. If anyone is found not to have hurried and not to have entered “into the fortified cities,” not to have come to be “in the churches of God,” but standing outside, he will be caught by the enemies and destroyed.

^{16b} Who is the enemy? Let us see from what follows how he is described: “A lion has come up from his lair; he has set out to destroy nations.” This is the enemy we must flee. A lion is hunting us down. Who is this? Peter teaches us, saying: “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring

lion, looking for someone to swallow. Resist him, firm in the faith.” And according to the ninth Psalm: “He lies in ambush in secret; he lies in ambush like a lion in his lair.” And this lion lies in ambush not by day, but when night comes. For according to the hundred and third Psalm: “You appointed darkness, and it became night. In it all the beasts of the forest will prowl, young lions roaring to seize their prey and to seek their food from God.”¹⁷ “A lion has come up from his lair.” Where from? When? He is down below, fallen; he has gone down into the lowest parts of the earth. “A lion has come up from his lair.” You are a human being, and you are higher than the devil. You are stronger than he is, whatever kind of person you are, because he is down below on account of his wickedness. “A lion has come up from his lair; he has destroyed nations and carried them off.” He has come up “from his lair,” the place that fits his own punishment. “He has destroyed nations and carried them off. He has gone out from his place to turn your land into a desolation.” He wants to get into your land, of which we were speaking a little while ago. He wants to graze on each one of us. So he comes “to turn your land into a desolation,” so that the lion may trample down the seeds and make your land a wilderness. “And your cities will be pulled down, so that no one lives in them. Because of this, gird yourselves with sackcloth.” Since a lion has come up, and a lion threatens you and wants to wipe out your land, put on sackcloth. Weep and mourn. Through your prayers call upon God to destroy this lion away from you, so that you do not fall into his mouth. For it says, “As when the shepherd snatches from the lion’s mouth two legs or the lobe of an ear.” This lion is trying to seize you by the ears, so that through your itching appetite he can set false words before you and drive you away from the truth. He wants to seize your feet from the truth and devour you. But you, gird yourself with sackcloth, beat your breast, weep and wail, seeing the enemy standing over you, so that “the fury of the Lord’s anger” may turn away from you. And when that fury has turned away, may you be free from anxiety, with the lion no longer creeping up on you because you have entered the walled city, and may you be able to glorify God, who rescues you in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 6

¹ “Lord,” he says, “your eyes are upon faith.” Just as “the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous” (for he turns them away from the unrighteous), so the

eyes of the Lord are upon faith, for he turns them away from unbelief. So it was well said by the one who understood what he is saying in the prayer: "Lord, your eyes are upon faith." What is written here, then, is: "Lord, your eyes are upon faith." But "if a man of understanding hears a wise word, he will praise it and add to it." So see how much can be drawn out from "Lord, your eyes are upon faith." Paul says, "But now these three remain: faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love." Just as the eyes of the Lord are upon faith, so the eyes of the Lord are upon hope, and the eyes of the Lord are upon love. And since there is "a spirit of power and of love and of self-control," as the eyes of the Lord are upon love, so the eyes of the Lord are upon power, and so the eyes of the Lord are upon self-control. [The text seems to have a gap here.] The eyes of the Lord are upon righteousness. So the eyes of the Lord are upon all the virtues. If, then, you also want the rays of God's intelligible eyes to reach you, take up the virtues. And just as it says, "Lord, your eyes are upon faith," so it will be "Lord, your eyes" are upon each of the good things you acquire. And if you become such a person that the eyes of the Lord shine upon you, you will say, "The light of your face, Lord, has been marked upon us."

2a Next, let us look at what is said about sinners: "You scourged them, and they did not suffer." These perceptible scourges, when they are laid on living bodies, cause pain whether the people scourged want it or not. God's scourges are of a different kind. Some of those who are scourged feel pain, and some do not. Let us see whether we can explain what it is to feel pain from God's scourges and what it is not to feel it. Those who feel no pain from God's scourges are wretched, and those who do feel pain from them are blessed. For Wisdom says: "Who will set scourges over my mind, and over my lips a seal of cunning, so that they may not spare me for my ignorances, and my sins may not destroy me?" Notice the words "Who will set scourges over my mind?" So there are scourges that scourge the mind. The scourges of God scourge the mind. A word that takes hold of the soul and brings it to a sense of what it has done wrong scourges it. It scourges the blessed person, who feels pain under the scourges, because what is said strikes home and he does not despise the one who rebukes him. But when someone is found, so to speak, past feeling, it will be said of him: "You scourged them, and they did not suffer." Take the same word spoken in rebuke, for example, aimed at the mind of a person whose conscience has been defiled by some sin. If one of the

hearers is pained, so that it is said of him, "Did you see how he was cut to the heart?", and another of the hearers feels no pain but is numb to those who rebuke him, then clearly it will be said of the one who feels nothing: "You scourged them, and they did not suffer." That is one explanation of "they did not suffer" or "they suffered." Let us see whether we can find another. In bodies, some parts become dead and dried up, and often the dead limbs behave differently from the living ones. When things able to cause pain are applied to a living limb, the person to whom they are applied feels pain. But when the same things are applied to the insensible limb, he does not feel it, since deadness is in it.

^{2b} If you have seen this in the body, transfer it to the soul, and see that there is also a soul whose members are deadened, so that it does not feel the scourges, even if painful things are brought to it. Terrible things are brought to it, but this particular soul will not feel them, while another soul will. And perhaps the one who feels nothing under the pains brought to him grieves more over not feeling than over feeling. He would rather suffer pain if painful things were applied, since that is a sign that he is alive. He is distressed at feeling nothing under painful things. Just as this happens with bodies, so I think that in the words "they would wish they had been burned by fire" something like this is shown. When fire is applied to someone and the one being burned does not feel it, those people, having understood the contrast between those who feel nothing under their pains and those who do feel, would wish to feel the fire rather than not feel it. And when that fire which has been appointed for sinners is applied to them, a person might pray to feel it rather than not feel it. All this is on account of "You scourged them, and they did not suffer." "You consumed them, and they were not willing to accept instruction." When God, who provides for all things, applies cleansing remedies for the salvation of the soul, he has, for his part, finished the work. You will understand "You consumed them, and they were not willing to accept instruction" from the example of one who hands on knowledge and one who is unwilling to receive knowledge from the one handing it on. Let the teacher do everything on his side and spend himself wholly on handing on knowledge, and let the pupil refuse to accept what is said. I could say to the teacher about such a pupil: "You have finished your work with this man, and he was not willing to accept instruction." So if everything from providence is directed toward us so that we may be brought to completion and

made perfect, and we do not accept what providence does, which draws us toward perfection, then someone who understands might say to God: “Lord, you have consumed them, and they were not willing to accept instruction.”

^{3a} “They made their faces harder than rock.” You can understand this too from more bodily things. Among those who sin, some hear words of rebuke for their sin and blush, shrink back, and bow down when the word of rebuke touches them. Others are such that they are shameless. They feel no shame over what they are rebuked for, over what they have done wrong. Of these who feel no shame you could say, “They made their faces harder than rock.” If you have understood this about the body, then let my argument carry you over to the soul, and think of a face of which it is said, “but then face to face.” Picture a hard soul, like the hardened heart of Pharaoh. In the face of what is announced to it, it stands resistant. It throws off what is said, as it were, and is not shaped by what is proclaimed. For there you will find that the words fit: “They made their faces harder than rock, and they were unwilling to turn back. And I said, Perhaps they are poor, because they were unwilling to know the way of the Lord and the judgment of God. I will go to the great ones and speak to them.” The prophet has thought about those who are unwilling to be disciplined and who take no notice of God’s scourges, and he says that he has understood the cause. Their soul is poor. “And I said, Perhaps they are poor, because they were not able, because they did not know the way of the Lord and the judgment of God.”

^{3b} “I will go to the great ones and speak to them.” Those who are “great” in their souls are spoken of in praise. Among the Greeks too the word “great-hearted” is constantly used, along with the greatness of the rational soul. When someone takes on great matters, has worthy purposes, and always looks to what is needed, namely how to live according to right reason, wanting and seeing nothing low or petty, such a person has this greatness and largeness in the soul. So the first group, whom the word rebuked, did not listen, says the prophet, because they were poor. That is why they did not listen: they are poor. “I will go to the great ones and speak to them.” And if there is a blessing in speaking “into the ears of those who listen,” then it is a blessing when a speaker finds a great-souled hearer. Since this is so, and since we know that the loss is not so much the speakers’ as the hearers’, when they do not accept what is proclaimed (and the prophet accuses them of poverty of mind and understanding), let us ask God to receive, as the word grows in us,

greatness and largeness of soul in Christ Jesus. Then we will be able to hear the holy and sacred words. To him belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 7

^{1a} God, who judges [according to . . .], gives those he punishes room. He does not, the moment a person sins, bring the full end of punishment down on the sinner. That is why he punishes “by little and little” as he judges. There is an example of this in Leviticus. In the curses on those who transgress the law, after the earlier punishments it is written: “And it shall be, if after these things you do not turn back, says the Lord, I will add to you seven plagues as well.” And again it describes another punishment: “And it shall be, if after these things you do not turn back, but walk toward me crookedly, I also will walk with you in crooked anger.” You will find God measuring out punishments sparingly, because he wants to bring the sinner to repentance, and not paying back all of them at once. So this is what happened to the people, as far as the letter of the text goes. And after the word threatens them with what they will suffer after those things, it says: “And it shall be in those days, says the Lord your God, I will not strike you to the point of complete destruction.” [But if this reaches especially to the punishments to come, ...] If not, let whoever is able move on from what happened to the people in this life to those coming punishments as well. For I would say, being persuaded of it, that just as they “serve a copy and shadow of heavenly things,” so that people was punished for their own sins as a copy and shadow of the true punishments. So the whole punishment in the law and the prophets that touches the people contains a shadow of true punishments.

^{1b} If, then, there was no final destruction for those people because of their sins, but only an end at some point, and if it will not be that there is never any punishment on sinners even after death, [the text is unclear here], then final destruction came on Jerusalem when the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar took place. Yet someone will say that even then it was not a final destruction, nor was it in the time of the Maccabees. But the final destruction of the people came at the coming of my Lord Jesus Christ. For as long as the Savior had not said to them, “Look, your house is left to you,” it was not left. But when he wept over Jerusalem and said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were

not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate,” the house was left. “Jerusalem is surrounded by armies,” as though the house had been abandoned, and “her desolation has drawn near.” Then, after their fall, salvation came to us, [who were of the nations]. So they were being punished, and the final destruction did not reach them until the coming of my Lord Jesus.

²I wonder whether the same kind of thing happens with us too, and some punishments come in such a way that some people never experience a second punishment but are satisfied with the first ones. Others come to the second, though not to the third, and others will come even to the fourth. For the words “I will add seven plagues” point to some mystery: first one plague happens, then a second, then a third, up to the seven mentioned, in the case of some people. But not everyone is struck with seven plagues. I think some will be struck with six, others with five, others with four, others with three or two. And the one who is lowest of all in punishments, I think, will be struck with a single plague. God, then, knows what concerns the plagues. That is why it is written here, at the beginning of the reading, “And it shall be in those days,” the days concerning the things mentioned, “I will not make an end of you.” But the final destruction does not come in those days. For there are certain days when he will bring to final destruction those whom he will bring.

^{3a}“And it shall be, when you say, ‘Why has the Lord our God done all these evils to us?’ you shall say to them, ‘Because you forsook me and served other gods in your own land, so you will serve them in a land that is not yours.’” Let the plain wording be understood; for now it is enough to bring the reminder, drawn from the wording, to those who are able to hear. The sons of Israel, then, had the holy land and the temple, the house of prayer. They ought to have served God. But they transgressed the divine commandments, worshiped idols, and took over the idols of Damascus, as it is written in the books of Kings, and took up other idols of the nations into the holy land. By taking in the idols of the nations they made themselves deserving of being thrown down into the land of the idols, to end up there, where they bowed down to the idols. So the word says to them, according to the plain text: “Because you forsook me and served foreign gods in your own land, so you will serve foreign gods in a land that is not yours.” But everyone who makes a god of something serves foreign gods. Do you treat food and drink as divine? Your god is “the belly.” Do you honor silver as a great good, and

the wealth of this earth below? Your god and lord is Mammon. Jesus himself named it, calling it the lord of those who love money, when he said, “You cannot serve God and Mammon,” and “No one can serve two lords.” So whoever honors silver, admires wealth, thinks it a good thing, welcomes the rich as though they were gods, and despises the poor as though they had no god of their own, that person makes silver into a god.

^{3b} If someone who is in the church of God worships foreign gods, making gods of things that do not deserve to be made gods, he will be thrown out into a foreign land. Let him worship there the gods he worshiped while he was inside. Let the lover of money be outside the church, thrown out. Let the glutton be outside the church. This is one figurative reading. I do not want to pry now into things beyond me, such as the land about which the Savior said, “Who will give you what is ours?” God also arranged it so that when worship was given to idols in a certain land, some were cast out of their own land and came to the land about which it is written: “Hear, Israel: why are you in the land of your enemies? You were counted with those going down to Hades. You forsook the fountain of life, the Lord. If you had walked in the way of God, you would have lived in peace for all time.” Now, then, we are in a foreign land, and we pray to do the opposite of what the sons of Israel did in the holy land. They worshiped foreign things in the holy land. We, in a foreign land, worship the God who is foreign to the land, foreign to the affairs of earth. For the ruler of this age rules here, and God is foreign to his sons. But when I say “foreign,” I do not mean this: I do not mean that God did not create the world. I mean that he is foreign to the lord of wickedness, foreign to the sins now present.

^{3c} And yet, even when we want to worship in this land of affliction the God who is foreign to the works of sin, let us see what we do. We do not say, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” Rather we say, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song, [not] in a foreign land?” We are looking for a place to sing the Lord’s song, a place to worship the Lord our God, on foreign ground. What, then, is that place? I have found it. He came to this land wearing the body that saves. He took “the body of sin” “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” so that in this place, through Christ Jesus who came to live here and brought to nothing the ruler of this age and brought sin to nothing, I might be able to worship God here, and after this worship him in the holy land. For if someone who worshiped idols in the holy land has gone away

into the foreign land, then someone who has worshiped God in the foreign land will go away to the holy land in Christ Jesus. To him be glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 8

^{1a} The prophet takes up three virtues of God, as it were: his strength, his wisdom, and his understanding. To each of them he assigns its own work: to strength, the earth; to wisdom, the inhabited world; to understanding, the heaven. Listen to what the text says: "The Lord who made the earth by his strength, who set the inhabited world upright by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heaven." Let us apply this to our own earth too, for it was said to Adam, "Earth you are." We need God's strength. Without the power of God we cannot accomplish the things that are not "according to the mind of the flesh." But when the members that are upon the earth have been put to death, what accords with the wish of the Spirit will come about, since, as the apostle says, the deeds of the flesh are put to death by the Spirit. So "the Lord is the one who made the earth by his strength." And if you come to this earth as well, and are able to see what is written in Job (as we found it in the more accurate copies), that he set it "upon nothing," you will see that by God's strength it lies at the very center. I come now to the inhabited world. I know a soul that is inhabited, and I know a soul that is desolate. If a soul does not have God, if it does not have Christ who said, "I and my Father will come to him and make our dwelling with him," if it does not have the Holy Spirit, it is desolate. It is inhabited when it has been filled with God, when it has Christ, when the Holy Spirit is in it. The Scriptures speak of this in various and different ways: that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in the soul of a human being. David, for example, in the psalm of confession, asks the Father for these very spirits, saying, "Establish me with a guiding spirit," "Renew an upright spirit within my inward parts," "and do not take your Holy Spirit away from me."

^{1b} What are these three spirits? The guiding spirit is the Father, the upright spirit is Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit. [The Greek of the next clause is damaged; the sense is that] these serve to establish the inhabited world, which stands in no other way than in the wisdom of God. For "wisdom will help the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city." And "whoever despises wisdom and instruction is wretched; his hope is empty, his labors are profitless, and his works are useless," says the book entitled the

Wisdom of Solomon. For this reason, as far as we are able, since the inhabited world is set upright by the wisdom of God, let us ourselves also wish to have our own inhabited world set upright, since it has perhaps fallen. For this inhabited world fell when we came into the place of affliction. It fell when “we sinned, we acted impiously, we did wrong,” and it needs to be set upright. So it is God who set the inhabited world upright. But if you do not take “set the inhabited world upright” in this way, and understand the inhabited world in a more ordinary sense, then ask from what he set the inhabited world upright. Ask about the fall of the world, so that when you find its fall you may see its restoration. If anyone, then, is in this inhabited world, if you understand the world in this way, he is [still] before the setting upright. If it has fallen, it clearly needs to be set upright, yet no one who has not fallen needs to be set upright. And if it has been set upright, let us see who it is; clearly each one of those in the world has fallen through sin. It is the Lord who sets upright “those who have been broken down,” and who “upholds all who fall.” “In Adam all die,” and so the world has fallen and needs to be set upright, so that “in Christ all” may be made alive. So I have explained what concerns the inhabited world in two ways: in one, showing in the case of each individual how every soul is either inhabited or desolate; in the other, fixing the discussion on the world itself.

2a “And by his understanding he stretched out the heaven.” It was not by accident that the prophet took “understanding” in connection with heaven. You will find it said in Proverbs: “God by wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding he prepared the heavens.” So there is a certain understanding of God, and you should look for it nowhere except in Christ Jesus. Everything of this kind that belongs to God is Christ. He himself is the wisdom of God, he himself is the [power] of God, he himself is the righteousness of God, he himself is sanctification, he himself is redemption. In the same way he himself is the understanding of God. The subject underneath is one, but by our different ways of thinking about him the many names apply to different things. You do not think the same thing about Christ when you think of him as wisdom as when you think of him as righteousness. When you think of wisdom, you take it as knowledge of divine and human things. When you think of righteousness, you take it as the power that gives to each in the universe what he deserves. When you think of sanctification, you take it as the power that brings it about that those who believe and are dedicated

to God become holy. So also you will think of him as understanding when you take it as knowledge of good things, bad things, and things that are neither. [The next lines are corrupt in the Greek, and this is my best reading:] Now evil is separated from good for those who dwell in heaven, or who wear the heavenly man, so that that heaven may no longer be defiled, because heaven was stretched out by the understanding of God. Neither is the righteous man defiled, who is himself heaven. For the righteous man also is heaven, as has been said: “And he stretched out the heaven by his understanding.”

^{2b} How then is heaven stretched out? By wisdom stretching it out. That wisdom does the stretching is shown in the words “Since I stretched out words and you paid no attention.” There he speaks of a kind of stretching out of words, and that is how heaven is stretched out. In the hundred and third psalm it is also said, “stretching out the heaven like a skin.” Our soul too, which was drawn in before, is stretched out, so that it can take in the wisdom of God. But let us return to what we have before us. We were speaking of heaven having been made by understanding. And we say that those who wear the heavenly man are themselves heaven. For if it is said to the sinner, “You are earth, and to earth you will go,” could it not be said to the righteous man, to whom the kingdom of the heavens belongs, “You are heaven, and to heaven you will go”? Or is it rather that, on account of the earthly man, “You are earth, and to earth you will go” is said to the one who wears “the image of the earthly,” but on account of the heavenly man, once you wear “the image of the heavenly,” it will no longer be fitting to say, “You are heaven, and to heaven you will go”? Each of us has heavenly works and earthly works. Earthly works are those that bring down to the earth, which is akin to them, the one who stores them up on earth and does not store up [treasure in heaven]. Again, heavenly works lead up to the places in heaven that are akin to the works the one who stores up [treasure in heaven], the one who has worn “the image of the heavenly,” the things done according to virtue.

^{3a} “And he brought up clouds from the end of the earth.” This saying came up recently in the psalm as well, and we were saying how God “brought up clouds from the end of the earth.” It is necessary to go over these things again. For those who know them, it serves as clarification and a reminder of what was said. For those who have forgotten, or who were not present, it

serves to make this clear, whether it is revealed and made plain or understood in some other way. We said that the saints are clouds. For the words “Your truth reaches to the clouds” cannot refer to lifeless clouds. Rather, the truth of God reaches to the clouds that hear God’s command and know where to send rain and from whom to hold it back. Since there are clouds which God commands to rain or not to rain, it is written, “I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon it.” Now with these clouds in the sky, if there is no rain, God has not commanded the clouds not to rain on the vineyard or the land. Rather, no cloud appears at all, as it is written in the third book of Kingdoms. There, in the time of drought, no cloud appeared. But when, according to the word of Elijah’s prophecy, the rain was about to come, a trace of a cloud appeared, “like a man’s footprint,” and it became a cloud producing rain.

^{3b} But when the clouds exist and are commanded not to rain, because the soul is unworthy of the rain, then it is said, “I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon it.” So each of the saints is a cloud. Moses was a cloud, and he spoke as a cloud: “Give heed, heaven, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my utterance be awaited like rain, and let my words come down like dew.” If he had not been a cloud, he would never have said, “Let my utterance be like rain, and let my words come down like dew.” He speaks as a cloud: “like a shower on the grass, and like snow on the hay, for I called on the name of the Lord.” In the same way Isaiah also speaks as a cloud: “Hear, heaven, and give ear, earth, for the Lord has spoken.” And since he himself was a cloud, and was calling the ones who prophesied alongside him clouds, he says in his prophecy: “I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon it.”

⁴ Now that we have understood who the clouds are, let us see how God is the one who “brings up clouds from the end of the earth.” How is it “from the end of the earth”? The Savior says: “Whoever wants to be first among you will be last of all.” Paul kept this commandment, and in this world he was last. So he says: “For I think that God has displayed us apostles last, as men condemned to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.” If anyone, then, keeps the Savior’s commandment and becomes last as far as this life is concerned, that person becomes a cloud. God does not bring up clouds from the first men of the earth. He does not bring up clouds from consuls, or from rulers, or from the rich. For “blessed are the

poor, because yours is the kingdom of God.” Do you see how God brings up from the last, and gives bodily form to the clouds? Therefore, if we want to become clouds, ones that the truth of God reaches, let us become last of all. Let us say in our works and in our disposition, “For I think that God has displayed us apostles last.” Even if I am not an apostle, I am free to become last, so that God, who brings up clouds from “the end of the earth,” may bring me up. “And he made lightnings for the rain.” Those who are skilled in these matters say that lightning comes about when clouds rub against one another. What happens on earth with flint stones, when two stones strike together and fire is produced, they say happens also with the clouds. When clouds collide in the winter, lightning is produced. That is why lightning generally comes together with thunder: the thunder gives the sound of the clouds colliding, and the lightning produces the light.

5 If you have understood the illustration, now look at the spiritual cloud as well. Moses was a cloud; Joshua son of Nun was a cloud. These speak with one another, and from their words lightning comes. Jeremiah was a cloud; Baruch was a cloud. They converse with each other, and the lightning came from the words of Jeremiah and the words of Baruch. In the same way, if you can, gather from the Scriptures how lightning comes. And in the New Testament, Paul and Silvanus were two clouds. They came together, and the lightning of the letter came to be. So God “made lightnings for the rain, and brought out winds from his treasures.” Are these winds, then, really in treasures? Or is it not plain that the nature of these winds, as they blow over the earth, is of another kind? No, there are certain treasures of winds, treasures of spirits: “a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and godliness,” “a spirit of the fear of God,” “a spirit of power and love and self-control.” And you can gather these winds yourself from the Scriptures. These spirits are in treasures. What are the treasures? “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” These treasures are in Christ. From there, then, come these winds, these spirits, so that one person is wise, another faithful, another has knowledge, and another receives some other gift of God whatever it may be. “For to one is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit.”

6 So God “brought up clouds from the end of the earth, and made lightning for the rain, and brought out winds from his storehouses.” By God’s

grace, we too hope to arrive at these storehouses. And since there are many storehouses, perhaps there will be different resting places in God's storehouses for those who rise again. What I mean is this. The resurrection of the dead takes place in certain ranks. The apostle says, "each in his own rank." And since the ranks are not mixed together at random, this rank will be in one storehouse of God, that rank in another storehouse of God, and a third rank in yet another storehouse. All these storehouses, however, have one storehouse in which they dwell. That is why Paul said, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Just as I acquire the "one precious pearl" through the many pearls, so I come to the storehouse of storehouses, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, when I have become worthy of the spirits that come from God's storehouses. For "he brought out winds from his storehouses."

7 "Every man has been made foolish by knowledge." If every man has been made foolish by knowledge, and Paul is a man, then Paul too was made foolish by knowledge. He knew "in part," and in part he was made foolish by knowledge. He saw "through a mirror," seeing only a very small fraction of things, and, if one may say so, an infinitely small fraction of what he grasped. You will understand "every man has been made foolish by knowledge" from the opposite side. There are sins of Jerusalem, and there are sins of Sodom too. But compared with the worse sins of Jerusalem, the sins of Sodom are righteousness. For it says, "Sodom was justified by you." Now the sins of Sodom are not really righteousness. They are righteousness only in comparison with the greater injustice. In the same way, what Paul knew, compared with that knowledge which is in the heavens, compared with perfect knowledge, is foolishness. This is why "every man has been made foolish by knowledge." I think the Preacher grasped something like this when he said, "I said, I will become wise; but wisdom was far removed from me, farther than it was, and it is a deep depth. Who will find it?"

8 The argument is about to venture something bold: it will say that the one who came to live among us in this life emptied himself, so that the world might be filled by his emptying. But if that one who came to live in this life emptied himself, that emptying was wisdom. "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men." If I had said "the foolishness of God," how the fault-finders would have accused me! How they would have blamed me! Other things are said which they themselves consider good, but for this,

which they think was not well said, I would have been condemned because I said “the foolishness of God.” But now Paul, as a wise man with apostolic authority, dared to say that all the wisdom that has come to earth, both the wisdom in himself and in Peter and the apostles, all the wisdom that has come to live in the world, is “the foolishness of God.” For compared with that wisdom, which no place on earth can contain, compared with that wisdom above the heavens and above the world, this wisdom that came among us is the foolishness of God. Yet this “foolishness of God is wiser than men.” Which men? I do not mean the foolish ones. It is wiser even than wise men. And even if you speak of the wise of this age, whether rulers or prophets, still the “foolishness of God” that I have described “is wiser than” the rulers of this age.

⁹ The word is about to say something startling: “the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God,” and “God made the wisdom of the world foolish.” Did he make the wisdom of the world foolish by wisdom? Can the wisdom of the world even take in wisdom, so that it is shown to be foolish? Does the wisdom of God have to struggle against the wisdom of the world in order to prove it wrong? No. Only a little is needed, and that little is the “foolish thing of God.” By this small foolish thing of God the wisdom of this world is made foolish and exposed. For the wisdom of this world could not bear the wisdom of God. Take an example, so that you can see how “the foolish thing of God” “made the wisdom of the world foolish.” Suppose I, who seem to know many things, and more than most, had to argue with someone senseless and uneducated, who understands nothing and has never struggled over any noble arguments at all. Do I need logic against him, or deeper insights, if his thoughts are foolish? Do I not need only a single little word, a bit sharper than his own wording, so that I can expose his folly? So it is with the wisdom of this world, to make it foolish. There is no need for the wisdom of God to fight against it, for that wisdom is down below. The foolish thing of God is enough, because “the foolish thing of God is wiser than men,” and “the weak thing of God is stronger than men.” My Savior and Lord has taken on all these opposites, so that by opposites he might undo opposites. In this way we are made strong by the weakness of Jesus and made wise by the foolish thing of God. Once brought into these, we may be able to go up to the wisdom and the power of God, Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and might for ever. Amen.

HOMILY 9

1a As for the recorded coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, his visit in the body was universal and shone out on the whole world, when “the Word became flesh and lived among us.” For “the true light was there, which lights every person coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own did not receive him.” But we must know that he also visited earlier, though not in the body, in each of the saints. And after this visit of his which could be seen, he visits us again. If you want proof of this, pay attention to “the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: Hear,” and so on. For who is “the word that came from the Lord,” whether to Jeremiah or to Isaiah or to Ezekiel or to anyone at all, if not the one who “in the beginning was with God”? I know of no other word of the Lord than the one of whom the evangelist said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We must also know this: the Word’s visit is made to each person, especially those who can be helped by it. For what good is it to me if the Word has visited the world, but I do not have him?

1b On the other hand, even if he has not yet come to the whole world, grant that I have become like the prophets, and then I have the Word. I would say that Christ came to Moses, to Jeremiah, to Isaiah, to each of the righteous. What he said to the disciples, “Behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age,” was already being fulfilled in fact before his coming. For he was with Moses, he was with Isaiah, and with each of the saints. How could those men have spoken a word of God if the Word of God had not come to them? This needs to be understood above all by us who belong to the Church, who want the God of the law and the God of the gospel to be the same, and the same Christ then and now and for all ages. There will be people who cut off the older divinity, the one before the Savior’s coming, from the divinity proclaimed by Jesus Christ. That is at least their own opinion. But we know one God, then and now, and one Christ, then and now. I say this because of the words, “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying.” So what should we hear? “Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to those living in Jerusalem.” We are the men of Judah, through Christ. For it is plain that “our Lord has risen out of Judah.” And if I show that the name of Judah, according to the Scripture,

refers to Christ, then the men of Judah are not the Jews who disbelieve in Christ, but all of us who believe in Christ.

^{1c} “Judah, may your brothers praise you. Your hands are on the back of your enemies.” “May they praise you.” His brothers did not praise that Judah, the son of Jacob. But the brothers will praise this Judah, since he says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns to you.” That is not said to the other Judah. “Your hands are on the back of your enemies.” Where is that Judah found laying his hands on the back of his enemies? The history records nothing of the kind about him. But if you understand the coming of the Lord Jesus, who brings the devil to nothing, who strips off “the principalities and powers,” and makes a public spectacle of them, and leads them in triumph on the wood, you see how the prophecy that says, “Your hands are on the back of your enemies,” has been fulfilled in this Judah. If that is so, and the word is now spoken “to the men of Judah,” to whom could it be speaking if not to those who believe in Christ, who are somehow also called Judah on account of the tribe of Judah?

^{2a} The word is spoken “to the men of Judah” and “to those living in Jerusalem.” This is the Church. For the city of God is the Church, the “vision of peace.” In her is the peace that he brought to us. If we are indeed children of peace, that peace increases and is seen. So “hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to those living in Jerusalem. And you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Cursed is the man who does not listen to the words of the covenant that I commanded your fathers.” Who above all listens to “the words of the covenant that God commanded the fathers”? Is it those who believe in him? Or those who are shown, by their not believing in the Lord, not even to believe Moses? For the Savior says to them, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” So they have not believed Moses. But we, believing in Christ, believe the covenant given through Moses, and it is also spoken to us, so that we may not become accursed: “Cursed is the man who does not listen to the words of the covenant that I commanded your fathers.” They, then, are the ones under the curse, for they did not listen to “the covenant that God commanded the fathers.” “In the day,” he says, “when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace.”

2b God has also brought us out “of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace.” This is especially so for anyone who understands what is written in John’s Revelation, that the place “where their Lord was crucified is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt.” If it is “called spiritually Egypt,” then it is not this Egypt, the one we can see, that is spiritually called Egypt. Clearly, then, if you understand the Egypt that is called so spiritually and you come out of it, you are the one who has come out “of the land of Egypt and out of the iron furnace,” and the word is spoken to you: “Listen to my voice and do according to all” these things. Then there is a promise of God to those who listen, if they do what has been commanded: “And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Not everyone who says he is God’s people is God’s people. So the one who promised to be God’s people heard the words “you are not my people,” in the saying “because you are not my people.” That people was told “not my people,” and then this other people was in turn called a people. For “they made me jealous with what is no god.” He says this about those others: “They provoked me to anger with their idols. And I will make them jealous with what is no nation; with a senseless nation I will provoke them to anger.”

3a So we have become a people for God, and “the righteousness of God” belongs to the people who come from the nations. For this people is born all at once. It is also said in the prophet: “If a nation was born at one time.” A nation was born at one time when the Savior came to live among us, and five thousand believed in a single day, and on another day three thousand more were added. We can see a whole people being born by the word of God, and the barren woman, who had not borne children before, giving birth all at once. To her it is said: “Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and cry out, you who are not in labor, because the children of the desolate one are more than those of the woman who has a husband.” The church is “desolate” of the law; she was desolate of God. The synagogue is the one called the woman who has a husband, the law. What, then, does God promise me? “You shall be my people, and I will be your God.” He is not God of everyone, but only of those to whom he gives himself, just as he gave himself to that patriarch to whom he said, “I am your God,” and again to another, “I will be your God,” and about others, “I will be their God.” When, then, do we attain, each one of us individually, to having God be our God?

And if you want to learn whose God he is and to whom he grants his own name, he says: "I am the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God [of Jacob]."

^{3b} Explaining this, the Savior says: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Who is the dead person? The sinner, the one who does not have the one who said, "I am the [life]"; the one who has dead works, who has not yet repented from dead works. Of these the apostle says: "not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works." If, then, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living," and we know who the living person is, namely the one who lives as a citizen according to Christ and remains with him, then if we want God to be the God of each one of us, let us renounce the works of death. Then he will fulfill his promise, which says: "And I will be your God, so that I may establish my oath which I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey." Notice that he says, "I will establish my oath which I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey," as though he had not yet given them "the land flowing with milk and honey." For this is not the land that God called "flowing with milk and honey." It is the land the Savior taught about when he said: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

^{4a} Next the prophet answers what the Lord had said before. The Lord had said, "Cursed is the man who will not listen to the words of this covenant." And the prophet says, "I answered and said, 'So be it, Lord.'" What does "So be it, Lord" mean? Cursed is the one who will not remain in the words of this covenant. "And the Lord said to me: Read these words in the cities of Judah and outside Jerusalem." We too read the words of God to those outside, calling them to salvation. "Hear the words of this covenant and do them." And they did not do them. "And the Lord said to me: A conspiracy was found among the men of Judah and among those living in Jerusalem." Or are we going to repent over the sins spoken of concerning the men of Judah, knowing that we are the men of Judah, since Christ was prophesied and spoken of as Judah? Perhaps, because there are some among us who are sinners and act contrary to the right word, the prophet says for this reason, "A conspiracy was found among the men of Judah and among those living in Jerusalem." For when a bond of injustice and a bond of sins is found in some who are called by the name of the church, so that what is said of the sinner fits them, "each man is held fast by the cords of his own sins," then God might say, "A bond was found among the men of Judah." May no such

bond be found among us! But how is no bond found among us, if even to this day there is a bond in some? “Loosen every bond of injustice, undo the knots of violent contracts, tear up every unjust written agreement. Break your bread for the hungry.” So “a bond was found among the men of Judah and among those living in Jerusalem. They turned back to the injustices of their fathers, those of earlier times.”

^{4b} “They turned back to the injustices.” Whose? He does not simply say “of the fathers.” What is the addition? “They turned back to the injustices of their fathers, those of earlier times.” We were saying that these things are said to us, and to those among us who sin. How then did those among us who sin turn back not simply to “the injustices of the fathers,” but to those “of their fathers of earlier times”? Perhaps our fathers are of two kinds, and there is among us a worse kind of fathers. Before we believed, we were, let us say, sons of the devil, as the word of the Gospel shows when it says, “You are of your father the devil.” But when we believed, we became sons of God. So whenever we sin, we turn back to the injustices not simply of the fathers, but of our earlier fathers. To show that we have two fathers, I will use words from the forty-fourth Psalm, which read: “Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people and the house of your father.” He says “forget the house of your father” as a father himself, for as a father he says, “Listen, daughter.” So then we have two fathers. But “forget the house of your father” means the earlier one. If you forget your earlier house and then turn back again to sins, you have committed the sins spoken of here. “They turned back to the injustices of their fathers, those of earlier times.” I was saying that the devil was once our father, before God became our Father, since now the devil is not our father. We will show this also from the catholic letter of John, where it is written, “Everyone who practices sin has been born of the devil.”

^{4c} If “everyone who practices sin has been born of the devil,” then in a sense we are born of the devil as many times as we sin. So the one who is always being born of the devil is wretched, just as, on the other side, the one who is always being born of God is blessed. For I will not say that the righteous person was born of God once for all. He is always being born, with each good deed, in which God begets the righteous person. Now suppose I bring you to the Savior and show that the Father did not beget the Son once and then release him from his begetting, but always begets him. Then I will

show that something similar holds for the righteous person. Let us see who our Savior is. He is “the radiance of glory.” The radiance of glory was not begotten once and then ceased to be begotten. Rather, as long as the light is producing the radiance, so long is the radiance of God’s glory being begotten. Our Savior is the wisdom of God, and wisdom is “a radiance of eternal light.” If, then, the Savior is always being begotten, this is also why he says, “Before all the hills he begets me.” He does not say, “Before all the hills he has begotten me,” but “Before all the hills he begets me.” And so the Savior is always being begotten by the Father. In the same way, you also, if you have the Spirit of adoption, are always being begotten by God in him, in each work and in each thought. Being begotten in this way, you become one who is always being begotten as a son of God in Christ Jesus. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 10

1a If the oracles of God are in the Law and the Prophets, in the Gospels and the Apostles, then the one who is learning from the oracles of God must have God as his teacher. For “the one who teaches man knowledge” is God, as it is written in the Psalms. And the Savior also testifies that no one should be given the title of teacher on earth, saying, “And do not call anyone teacher on earth, for you have one teacher, the Father in heaven.” The Father in heaven teaches either by himself, or through Christ, or in the Holy Spirit, or through Paul, say, or through Peter, or through some other of the saints. Only let the Spirit of God and the Word of God come to dwell among us and teach. Why have I said this? Because the prophet says, “Make it known to me, Lord, and I shall know.” For I shall not know unless you make it known to me. But if I come to know because you make it known to me, “then I shall see their practices,” and I shall understand what each one is doing and what his purpose is. That is what the prophet says. Next, let us see what the Savior says in the prophet: “I, like an innocent lamb being led to be sacrificed, did not know.

1b They devised a plan against me, saying: Come, let us put wood into his bread, and wipe him out from the land of the living, so that his name will be remembered no more.” As the prophet Isaiah also says, Christ “was led like a sheep to slaughter, and like a lamb silent before the one who shears it, so he does not open his mouth.” There, then, Isaiah speaks about him. Here Christ speaks about himself: “I, like an innocent lamb led to slaughter to be sacri-

ficed, did not know.” He did not say what he did not know. He did not say, “I did not know evil things,” nor “I did not know good things,” nor “I did not know sin.” He said simply, “I did not know.” So he has left it to you to investigate what he did not know. And learn what he did not know from the words, “He made him who did not know sin to be sin for us.” For to know sin is to commit sin, just as to know righteousness is to practice righteousness. So the one who proclaims what concerns righteousness but does not practice righteousness has not known righteousness.

² “They devised a plan against me, saying: Come, let us put wood into his bread.” That the Jews crucified him is plain, and we proclaim it openly. But how you are to fit this to the words “they devised a plan against me, saying: Come, let us put wood into his bread” takes some effort to understand. The bread of Jesus is the word, on which we are fed. So when he was teaching among the people, they wanted to attach a stumbling block to his teaching by crucifying him, and they said, “Let us put wood into his bread.” For whenever the fact that the teacher was crucified is attached to the word of Jesus’ teaching, wood has been put into his bread. Let them, then, speak as men who plotted with malice: “Come, let us put wood into his bread.” But I will say something even more surprising: the wood put into his bread has made the bread better. I take an example from the law of Moses: the wood thrown into the bitter water made it [sweet]. In the same way the wood of the suffering of Jesus Christ, coming into the word, has made his bread sweeter. Before the wood came into his bread, when it was only bread and there was no wood in his teaching, “his voice did not go out into all the earth.” But since the bread received power through the wood put into it, the word of his teaching has been distributed over the whole inhabited world. And the wood then was a symbol of the suffering of Jesus, through which the bitter water becomes sweet. For I say that the law, when it is not understood, is bitter water. But if the wood of Jesus comes, and the teaching of my Savior takes up residence, the law of Moses becomes sweet and most pleasant when it is read and understood. So they said, “Come, let us put wood into his bread.”

³ They also say, “Let us wipe him out from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more.” That was how they killed him: as though they were erasing his name. But Jesus knows how he dies and why. So he says, “Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains

alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” So the death of Jesus becomes an ear of wheat, making what was sown many times over and abundant in yield. Suppose, for the sake of argument, he had not been crucified and had not died: the grain of wheat would have remained alone, and many would not have come from it. Consider his words, then, to see whether he did not mean this: “If the grain of wheat does not fall into the earth and die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” The death of Jesus bore fruit in all these people. And if his death bore fruit in so many, in how many will the resurrection bear fruit?

4a “Lord of hosts, who judge justly, who test the kidneys and hearts, may I see your vengeance on them.” He prays this prophetically: to see God’s vengeance on them. For Jerusalem has been surrounded by armies, and its desolation has drawn near, and it has been told, “See, your house is left to you.” So: “May I see your vengeance on them, for to you I have revealed my cause. Therefore the Lord says this concerning the men of Anathoth who seek my life, who say: Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die at our hands. See, I will visit them: their young men will die by the sword, and their sons and daughters will perish by famine. And there will be no remnant of them, for I will bring evil on the inhabitants of Anathoth in the year of their visitation.” The name of Anathoth is taken here for the sake of a pretext. But the whole Jewish mystery is spoken of in it figuratively, for Anathoth is interpreted “Obedience [of hearing]” (or “Answering”). Since there was a hearing of God among that people, as there was also the kingdom of God, and the saying came true about the kingdom, “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits,” so too it came about that “the men of Anathoth,” those who were in the place of Hearing, sought the life, not of Jeremiah (for the history does not say that the men of Anathoth sought the life of Jeremiah).

4b We have the books of Kings, where Scripture mentions Jeremiah, and nothing of the kind is said there, nor in Chronicles. We also have the prophet’s own book, and the men of Anathoth have said nothing like this there. So these words are spoken about Christ. “Those who seek my soul, who say: You shall not prophesy in the name of the Lord.” The Jews forbade Jesus to teach. “Otherwise you will die at our hands. See, I will visit them. Their young men will die by the sword, and their sons and daughters will die by famine.” They did not die by the sword at that time. But after his coming,

famine has now come upon them: “not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but a famine of the word of the Lord.” For among them it is no longer said, “Thus says the Lord Almighty.” This is the famine: that there is no longer any prophecy among them. And why do I say prophecy? There is not even teaching. Though they may be called wise ten thousand times over, the word of the Lord is no longer in them. For this has been fulfilled: “The Lord will take away from Judea and from Jerusalem the strong man and the strong woman, the giant and the mighty man, the warrior and the judge and the prophet and the diviner and the elder and the captain of fifty and the wonderful counselor and the wise master builder and the understanding hearer.” There is no longer anyone among them who can say, “As a wise master builder I have laid a foundation.” The master builders have moved over; they came to the church and laid the foundation, Jesus Christ. Those who come after them build on this.

5 So that people have been left behind in famine. For he will bring “evils upon those who live in Anathoth, in the year of their visitation.” “You are righteous, Lord, so I will plead my case before you. Yet I will speak my judgments to you. Why does the way of the ungodly prosper? Those who deal treacherously have flourished.” We still ask whether the God who gave the law and the prophets is good, when we see that “the way of the ungodly prospers” and he does not punish the ungodly. “All who deal treacherously have flourished.” These are the very people who speak against the Creator and slander him: “They have flourished, they have been planted and have taken root, they have produced children and borne fruit.” How great was the fruit when Marcion produced children, or Basilides, or Valentinus! For this is what is prophesied about the ungodly and said in the words, “They have produced children and borne fruit.” “You are near in their mouth, but far from their inward parts.” They name the name of Jesus, but they do not have Jesus, for they do not confess him as they ought. “And you, Lord, know me; you have seen me; you have tested my heart before you. Purify them for the day of their slaughter.” What shall I do to make this clear? He calls punishments a purification of those who are punished. For he says, “Purify them for the day of their slaughter.” Purify them by their being slaughtered. “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and scourges every son whom he receives.”

6 “How long will the earth mourn, and the grass of the field wither because of the wickedness of those who live in it?” Here too the prophet speaks

as though the earth were a living being, saying that the earth mourns because of the wickedness of those who walk upon it. So in the case of each one of us, the earth either mourns or rejoices. For it either mourns “because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it,” or it rejoices because of the virtue of those who dwell in it. In each one of us, then, this very element either rejoices or mourns. And perhaps the other elements do the same. I will say the same of water, and of the angel appointed over the water, so that I may explain what is meant by the earth mourning or not mourning. For it is not this body, “the earth,” that mourns “because of those who live in it.” Rather, understand with me that in the ordering of the whole, one being is appointed over the earth, another over the waters, another over the air, and a fourth over the fire. In the same way, let my argument carry you up to the whole order among living creatures, and among the heavenly stars. An angel is appointed over the sun, another over the moon, another over the stars. These angels, with whom we are, as far as we are earth, either rejoice if we act justly, or mourn over us when we sin. “The earth mourns,” he says, “because of those who live in it.” He gave the angel the same name as the earth itself. For it is like the saying, “The thing made by hands is accursed, and so is the one who made it.” That does not mean the lifeless thing itself is accursed. What is called “made by hands” is the one who sits beside the lifeless idol and answers to that name. In the same way, I will say that the angel appointed over the earth is called “earth,” and the angel appointed over the water is called “water.” This is the sense of the saying: “The waters saw you, O God; the waters saw you and were afraid; the depths were troubled by the roar of many waters; the clouds gave a voice, for your arrows go forth.”

7 “I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my inheritance, I have given my beloved soul into the hands of her enemies.” See the one who exists “in the form of God,” who was in the heavens. See his house, which is above the heavens. If you want to look higher still (for he is “in the Father”), see that God himself is his house. He leaves “father and mother,” the “Jerusalem above,” and comes into the region around the earth, and says, “I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my inheritance.” For that was his inheritance: the places with the angels, the rank among the holy powers. “I have given my beloved soul into the hands of her enemies.” He handed over his soul into the hands of the enemies of the soul: into the hands of the Jews who killed him, into the hands of rulers gathered against him, into the

hands of kings, when “the kings of the earth stood by, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.”

8 “My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest.” This inheritance of his on earth, the one he had inherited, turned wild against him. The Jews, enraged against him, became his inheritance “like a lion in the forest.” It is no wonder that his inheritance then became “like a lion in the forest,” because even now there are lions in the forest, who want to curse Jesus, who speak evil of him and plot against those who believe in him. “My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest. It has raised its voice against me; therefore I hated it. Is my inheritance to me a hyena’s den?” He prophesies about this inheritance. Has the inheritance become a hyena’s den? A hyena is the fiercest of creatures, a devourer of corpses that haunts the tombs and eats the bodies of the dead. “Is my inheritance to me a hyena’s den?” “Or is there a den against it all around? Go!” Since they have become such, I command you, the angels, to go and gather the wild beasts and hand them over to the beasts. “Go and gather all the beasts of the field, and let them come to devour it.” The “beasts of the field” have come and are devouring that people. You can see their hearts being devoured by the opposing powers. If Jesus did not spare those people, but said, “Go, gather the beasts,” how much more will he not spare us? If we do not keep the law of God, the word of the gospel, he will say again: Go, gather the beasts and hand it over. But we have boldness to say in our prayers, “Do not hand over to the beasts a soul that confesses you.” Let us confess our offenses and repent, and we will not be handed over to the beasts. Instead we will be handed over to holy angels, who will be our nurses, carrying us in their arms and bringing us across from this age to the age to come, in Christ Jesus, to whom belong the power and the glory forever. Amen.

HOMILY 11

1 Who is the one who says, “Because of me the whole land has been laid waste with utter desolation”? It is Christ who says this. Before his coming among us, the people had committed many sins, but not such as would cause them to be abandoned completely and handed over to a long captivity. But when they filled up “the measure of their fathers,” and added to the killing of the prophets and the persecution of the righteous the murder of “the Christ of God,” then came the word, “Your house is left to you.” And they suffered these things because of him, and “the whole land was laid waste with utter

desolation.” ² But if you want to hear a higher meaning of “Because of me the whole land has been laid waste with utter desolation,” look at the land within you, and how it was laid waste when Jesus came. It was laid waste when the members that are on the earth were put to death, and the land no longer does its own works. In the righteous person the works of the flesh, with which the flesh used to flourish, no longer appear: no more fornication, no more uncleanness, no more licentiousness, no more idolatry, no more sorcery, and the rest. The Savior also says, “Do you think that I came to bring peace on the earth? I did not come to bring peace but a sword.” It is true: before he came there was no sword on the earth, and neither did the flesh desire against the spirit nor the spirit against the flesh. But when he came, and we were taught what belongs to the flesh and what belongs to the Spirit, the teaching became like a sword on the earth and divided the flesh, the land, from the Spirit. So “the land was laid waste” when we carry about in the body the putting to death of Jesus, and no longer live according to the flesh, but the Spirit lives. We sow nothing to the flesh but everything to the Spirit, so that we may not reap corruption from the flesh but eternal life from the Spirit.

^{3a} The sinners are told, “Sow wheat and reap thorns.” Even if people busy themselves with the oracles of God, those who do not handle them well, who do not live as they should and do not believe, sow wheat and reap thorns. This is best understood of those who hold other doctrines and read the Scriptures. They reap thorns, not from the Scriptures, but from their own inventions. “Their lots will not profit them.” Others have also explained these words. Since we do not reject their explanation, we gladly bring it forward, not as though we had discovered it, but as those who have learned a good lesson. This word will profit you and us alike, if we pay attention to what is written. We seem to belong to a certain “lot,” since we preside over you, so that some people want to come to this lot. But you know that the lot does not by any means save. Many presbyters will perish, and many lay people will prove blessed. Some in the clergy do not live in a way that profits them or adorns the clergy. For this reason, say those who explained the passage, it is written, “Their lots will not profit them.” What profits is not simply sitting in the presbyters’ seat, but living worthily of the place, as the word demands. The word demands that you live well, and that we do too.

^{3b} But if one may put it this way, “the mighty will be mightily tested.” More is required of me than of the deacon, more of the deacon than of the lay person, and still more is required of the one who has been entrusted with the leadership over all of us, the leadership of the church itself. For this reason the apostle, who was entrusted with great things, says (listen): “So let a person regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required of stewards that someone be found faithful.” And so it is rare to find a faithful and good steward. Jesus, “who knows all things before they come to be,” says: “Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household to give the portion of food to his servants at the proper time?” Then he blames certain stewards and says: “But if that wicked servant begins to say, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in two, and will put his portion with the unfaithful.” So much for “Their lots will not profit them.”

⁴ Let us look next at a necessary rebuke, which it is good to take up on the moral level: “Be ashamed of your boasting, of your reproach before the Lord.” There are things in which we boast out of foolishness, though they are not worth boasting about. For instance, if someone boasts that he is rich and has acquired many possessions, it may be said to him, “Be ashamed of your boasting.” If someone boasts of this outward nobility of birth, it will be said to him, “Be ashamed of your boasting.” If someone boasts of expensive clothes, or of building a richly furnished house, such boasting is foreign to the boasting of the saints. So it will be said to such a person, “Be ashamed of your boasting.” Listen to the word of the prophet Jeremiah, who commands us not to boast even in wisdom. “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,” he says, “nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches. But let the one who boasts boast in this: to understand and know that I am the Lord.” If you want to boast, and not hear “Be ashamed of your boasting,” boast as the apostle did and say: “But may it never happen to me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” If you want to boast so that it is not said, “Be ashamed of your boasting,” listen to Paul boasting and learn when he says: “Most gladly, then, I will boast in my weaknesses, so that the

power of Christ may rest upon me.” Listen to what kind of things he boasts of: “in labors more abundantly” (which of us can say this?), “in prisons beyond measure, in deaths often. Five times I received forty lashes less one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked.” So we learn that there are differences among kinds of boasting. Some boasting deserves shame, and of it that apostolic saying could be used: “and their glory is in their shame.” They think they are glorified in the very things over which they ought to be ashamed.

^{5a} After this, let us look at the matter of the loincloth. For “Thus says the Lord: Go and buy yourself a linen loincloth, and put it around your waist, and you will not pass through water. And I bought a loincloth according to the word of the Lord and put it around my waist. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Take the loincloth that is around your waist, and get up and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock.” After some days he comes there and finds the loincloth rotted. Then the Lord adds, giving the starting point for explaining the loincloth: “As the loincloth clings to a man’s waist, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to myself, says the Lord, so that they would be for me a renowned people, a boast and a glory. And they did not listen to me.” So the prophet is taken to stand in the place of God. He wraps the linen loincloth around his waist, as God does with the people. For God says, “I made this people cling to myself.” So the people become, as it were, the loincloth of God. But why does the people become a loincloth around God’s waist? Let anyone who is able read Ezekiel, and see God, as it were, given a body in the account. In Ezekiel the parts of him from the waist down [are fire], and the parts from the waist up are electrum. Let that reader search out the reason why the lower part of God is fire. The things that belong to the waist and to birth, these are fire. For everything that exists in the realm of birth needs the cleansing that comes from fire. Everything in the realm of birth needs punishment.

^{5b} But the parts above the waist, which have passed beyond birth, are made of a substance that is, as it were, the purest and most precious. For electrum is said to be more precious than gold. Scripture uses illustrations to teach that the upper part of God’s body is more honorable and the lower part less so. This is why it presents God as made up of fire and electrum. [And there is a body of God † and he himself] In the realm of birth each of us is

fire; we are not the electrum. But if we ascend and make progress, we shall pass through the fire and be the electrum around the higher part of God's body. (For it is possible to move from being among the lower things today to becoming the upper part of God's body.) 6. So he makes the linen loincloth cling around his waist. Why? To show that the people are, as it were, a covering for God. For against those who want to accuse God, the people stand up and, as it were, shield him, and do not allow anything improper to be said about God. But when we sin, it is as when the prophet takes off this loincloth and condemns it to the river Euphrates so that it may be ruined there. In the same way the one who sins is thrown off from God's waist. Once thrown off, he is cast into the river Euphrates, the river of Mesopotamia, where the Assyrians, Israel's enemies, are, and where the Babylonians are. And there he is ruined. For although there are so many rivers, the prophet is sent from Judea to the river Euphrates to do business there and to carry away a little linen loincloth. Why also "linen"? Because it has its origin from the earth. It is a plant that grows up from the ground. Then, after it has been farmed, it is combed, washed, and scoured, [and worked on at great length], so that it becomes fit to be a loincloth or whatever else.

5c So all of us, too, have our origin like the Lord's waistcloth. Since we have our origin from the earth, we need a great deal of preparation: to be combed, to be washed, to lose the color of the earth. The natural color of flax in its origin is one thing, and the color it gets from the working is another. The color of flax in its origin is rather dark, but through the working it becomes brilliantly bright. Something like this happens to us who are in the realm of birth. We are dark at the beginning of believing. That is why it is said at the beginning of the Song of Songs, "I am dark and beautiful." At the beginning we resemble Ethiopians in our soul. Then we are cleaned so that we may become brighter, as in the words, "Who is this who comes up made white?" And we become "bright and clean linen." Then we are also woven into God's waistcloth, when we are worthy to be joined to God. God does not set us aside. He set aside the first people, "the whole house of Judah" and "the house of Israel." It came to the point that they were no longer of use, for he no longer girds himself with them. In their place God has girded himself with us. He did not throw away the waistcloth and stay naked; he wove himself another waistcloth. This waistcloth is the church from the nations. Let her know that if God did not spare the former ones, how much

more will he not spare her if she sins, unless she is worthy of God's waist. "But the one who is joined to the Lord is one spirit," in Christ Jesus, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 12

^{1a} What the prophet is commanded by God to say must be worthy of God. But if we stay with the letter, it appears not to be worthy of God, so that someone who hears the letter might say, "These writings are foolishness." The natural person will say this: "The natural person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him." So look at what the text says. "And you shall say to this people: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel." What he says as "the Lord, the God of Israel" must be worthy of the Lord of Israel. "Every wineskin will be filled with wine. And if they say to you, 'Shall we not indeed know that every wineskin will be filled with wine?'" Now if those who answer, standing on the plain wording, say this, claiming to know that "every wineskin will be filled with wine," they are lying. For not "every wineskin will be filled with wine." There are, at any rate, wineskins filled with oil or some other liquid. [Some, then, are lying; for not every wineskin will be filled with wine.] And the people answer, saying, "Shall we not indeed know that every wineskin will be filled with wine?" This will receive from us, as far as we are able, an explanation of the following kind. If we know the differences among wines and what is said about them, then, following these, we will see about the wineskins that it is true that "every wineskin will be filled with wine."

^{1b} For if a wineskin is good (let us name one that way, a wineskin among wineskins), it will be filled with wine according to its own goodness. And if it is worthless, when wineskins are compared and judged, it too will be filled with worthless wine according to its worthlessness. How then can we take from Scripture what it says about the different wines? About the worse ones it is written: "For their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and their branch from Gomorrah. Their grape is a grape of gall, a cluster of bitterness for them. Their wine is the rage of dragons, and the incurable rage of asps." About the better ones: "Your cup makes me drunk, like the strongest." And Wisdom calls people together to her own mixing bowl, saying, "Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you." So there is wine from Sodom, and there is wine which Wisdom mixes. And again: "A vineyard was made for the beloved on a horn, in a fertile place," planted by God, the one

called the vine of Sorek, being something chosen and wonderful. And there is also a vine of the Egyptians, which God strikes, according to what is written: “God struck their vine with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.”

^{2a} Now consider with me that all human beings, figuratively speaking, are able to hold wine. In that sense I call them wineskins. I say that the wicked person has been filled with “wine from the vine of Sodom,” with Egyptian wine, and with the wine of Israel’s enemies. But the holy person, who has been helped, has been filled with wine from the vine of Sorek, with the wine about which it is written, “Your cup makes me drunk, as the strongest [wine] does,” and again, the holy person has been filled with the wine which Wisdom mixed. Let me understand these things in terms of evil and virtue, so that the saying “every wineskin is filled with wine” may be seen to hold. But if we must also look at what comes through evil and through virtue (punishments for evil, blessings and promises for virtue), let us show from the sacred writings how punishments and promises are both called wine. “Take the cup of this unmixed wine, and you shall make all the nations drink, those to whom I send you.” Jeremiah says this, and the text goes on: “And they will drink and vomit and go mad and fall.” So here he has called punishments unmixed wine, which those drink who are worthy of unmixed wine, that is, of unmixed punishment. But there are others who drink a punishment that is not unmixed but mixed. For “there is a cup in the hand of the Lord, full of unmixed wine, a mixture. He tilted it from this one into that one. Yet its dregs were not emptied out; all the sinners of the [earth] will drink.” If you also want to see a cup of blessing, which the righteous drink, the cup of Wisdom would be enough, about which she said, “Drink the wine which I have mixed for you.” But look also at the Savior going up for the Passover into “a large upper room, furnished and prepared.” He keeps the feast with his disciples and gives them a cup. About this it is not written that he mixed it. For when Jesus gladdens his disciples, he gladdens them with unmixed wine, and he says to them: “Take, drink; this is my blood, poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink, in remembrance of me.” And: “Truly I tell you, I will not drink it from now on until I drink it new with you in the kingdom of God.”

^{2b} Do you see that the promise is the cup of the new covenant? Do you see that punishments are a cup of unmixed wine, and that another kind of punishment is a mixed cup? So for each person the cup is mixed according to the

worth of the good deeds mingled with the bad deeds, and that is what he will drink. Understand it this way. Those who are altogether strangers to godliness, who pay no attention to themselves at all but live however they happen to, drink the unmixed wine, about which we quoted the words of Jeremiah. But those who have not wholly fallen away and are not simply sinners, though they are unworthy of the cup “of the new covenant,” and who do now better deeds and now opposite ones, drink wine “of an unmixed mixture.” For God “tilted it from this one into that one.” Which “this one”? I see two cups, according to what is said: “He tilted it from this one into that one; yet its dregs were not emptied out.” Think of the cup of your good works in one hand of God. Or, if you want me to say it more boldly, let the cup of your good works be in God’s right hand, and let the cup of your sins be in God’s left hand. So when you are about to be punished for your sins, since you have also done some better works, there is a cup “in the hand of the Lord, full of unmixed wine, a mixture. And he tilted it from this one into that one,” from the one in the left hand into the one in the right. For you cannot drink only the cup of good deeds, since you have not done only good works. Nor can you drink only the cup of sins, for some good things have also been done by you.

2c This is why “he tipped it from this one into that one.” Wrath and punishment are mixed for you in proportion to your works, so that your punishment is either more diluted or sharper and more painful. As I said before, the sins are weighed against the good deeds in proportion. The effect of the cup of wrath, which is given [in measure] for each of the sins, is somehow softened or else not softened. But if you are good and noble through and through, you say, “I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call on the name of the Lord.” So “every wineskin,” whether good or wicked, “will be filled with wine.” According to the fitness of the skin, wine will be poured into it, following the sense of the “wineskins” named here. Oil is not poured into wineskins, nor any other liquid. Every wineskin must be filled with wine.

3a Next he teaches, on account of those who sinned then in Jerusalem and in Judea (as far as the plain wording goes), what kind of wine God means to fill these wineskins with, that is, the sinners. For it is written: “If they say to you, ‘Will we not know for certain that every wineskin will be filled with wine?’ then you shall say to them: This is what the Lord says: Look, I am

filling all who live in this land, and the kings, the sons of David who sit on his throne, and the priests.” The one who is about to punish spares no one. It is not the case that because someone served as a prophet, yet has sins, he will not be filled with the threats that are spoken. Nor does God spare a priest, who held the office and seemed to have a more honored name among the people, so as to keep him from being punished when he sins. The things written about those people, the apostle says, were written for our sake, “upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” So if anyone sins among these priests (by which I mean us, the presbyters), or among these Levites who stand around the people (I mean the deacons), he will receive this punishment. In the same way there are certain priestly blessings. God willing, we shall learn about them not long from now, after we have worked through the prophetic word, when Numbers is read, for something is going to be said there about priests. So God says he will fill “the priests and the prophets and Judah and all who live in Jerusalem” with “drunkenness,” and will scatter “them, a man and his brother, their fathers and their sons.” Let us understand this as follows: God gathers the righteous together, but scatters sinners. For this reason, as long as people did not move away from the east, God did not scatter them. But when they moved “from the east” and “each man said to his neighbor, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach to heaven,’” God says about them, “Come, let us go down and confuse their language there.” Then each one is confused and scattered to some place on the earth.

^{3b} The people of Israel, too, were in Judea so long as they did not sin. But once they sinned, they were scattered from the inhabited world and spread everywhere. Think of something like this for all of us. There is a church of the firstborn, enrolled in heaven, [where there is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem]. The blessed will be gathered there, so that they may be together. But sinners are punished in just this way: they are not with one another. I know of people in this life who, to punish and torment, want to hand someone over to an island, and who scatter the household of one who has offended the kingdom. The wife goes here, one son there, another son somewhere else, so that even in their misfortune the mother cannot enjoy her son, or the brother his brother. Think of something like this in the case of the unjust. You, the sinner, being managed by God, must taste something more bitter, so that you may be taught and saved.

You do not punish your servant or your son simply because you want to torment him, but to turn him around through hardship. In the same way God will discipline, through the pains that come from suffering, those who are not turned by the word and have not been healed. What he puts around them, he puts around them for discipline, as it has been said: "Continually you will be disciplined, Jerusalem, by hardship and the lash." So that the disciplining pain may increase, those who suffer are scattered from one another, so that this one and that one are not together. For the severity of the pain would be broken if each one found comfort in the other.

4 If I should add to the argument another reason for the scattering, I will set that out too. Wicked people who are together look to wicked things and increase them, just as good people together with good people think about good things. So the evil plan, which would have been strong among like-minded people, is broken up and divided when the wicked are scattered from one another. For this reason God arranges that the base are not with one another. Perhaps he is even looking out for them, so that their wickedness may not grow together, but may be diminished by being dissolved. This is the point of the words: "I will scatter them, a man and his brother, and their fathers and their sons together, says the Lord." "I will not long for them, and I will not spare, and I will not pity, because of their corruption."

5a Those from the heresies seize on sayings like these and say: "Do you see what the Creator is like? The God of the prophets, who says, 'I will not spare and I will not pity, because of their corruption'? How can this one be good?" But suppose I take as an example a judge who, for the good of the community, does not show pity, and a magistrate who rightly shows no mercy. From that example I will be able to persuade you that God, while sparing many, does not spare one. I will also take the example of a doctor, to show that in sparing the whole body he does not spare one limb. Suppose, for example, that the task set before a judge is to bring about peace and to establish what is beneficial for the nation under him. Suppose a murderer is brought before him, handsome in appearance and good to look at. Suppose a mother comes and offers pitiful words to the judge, so that her old age may be pitied. Suppose the wife of this man, who does not deserve pity, begs for mercy, and the children stand around and plead for him. In these circumstances, what benefits the community? Is it that he be shown mercy or not shown mercy? If he is shown mercy, he will go back to the same things. If he is not shown

mercy, he himself will die, but the community will be improved. So if God spares the sinner, and has mercy and pity on him so as not to punish, who will not be ruined? Which of the base, if their sins were stopped only by the fear of punishments, will not be ruined, and will not become worse? One can see such things happening in the churches too. Someone has sinned, and after the sin has asked for communion. If he is pardoned too quickly, the community is ruined.

^{5b} Then the sin of others grows. But suppose the judge reasons it out. He is not unmerciful or cruel; he cares for the one man too, but he cares more for the many than for the one. He considers the harm that will come to the community if that one man is kept in fellowship and his sin is pardoned. Plainly he will have the one cast out, so that he may save the many. Look also at a physician. Suppose he spares himself the cutting of what needs to be cut, and the burning of what needs to be burned, because of the pains that follow such treatments. In that case the disease grows and gets worse. But if he boldly goes to the knife and the cautery, he will heal by showing no pity, by seeming to have no compassion on the man who is burned and cut. So it is with God. He does not manage one human being; he manages the whole world, and governs everything in heaven and on earth everywhere. So he considers what is good for the whole world and for all that exists. As far as possible he considers also what is good for the one, but not so that the good of the one comes at the cost of the world. For this reason eternal fire has been prepared, for this reason Gehenna has been made ready, and for this reason there is an outer darkness. These are needed not only for the one who is punished, but above all for the community.

⁶ If you want Scripture as a witness that sinners are punished also for the instruction of others, even if they themselves may sometimes be past hope of cure, listen to Solomon in Proverbs: "When a scoffer is flogged, the fool will become shrewder." He did not say that the one being flogged would become shrewder and wiser because of the lashes. He says that the fool changes from folly to wisdom because of the lashes laid on the scoffer. That is what the word "shrewdness" signifies here. And the fool changes by seeing others flogged. So the punishment of others is good for us, provided we become worthy of salvation through others being punished. And just as the fall of Israel brought about the salvation of the Gentiles, so the punishment of some will bring about the salvation of others. This is why God, who is good, says:

“I will not spare, and I will not have compassion, because of their corruption.”

⁷ Now that we have set one main point within its limits, let us see what the other teaches us. “Hear and give ear, and do not be lifted up, for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord our God before it grows dark, and before your feet stumble on dark mountains. You will wait for light, and there will be the shadow of death, and they will be set in darkness. But if you will not hear in secret, your soul will weep before the face of insolence, and your eyes will shed tears, because the Lord’s flock has been crushed.” He wants the same people both to hear and to give ear. He is not satisfied with their only hearing, or only giving ear. That is why he says, “Hear and give ear.” Then after this he commands them not to be lifted up, and teaches what must be done. Let us understand from the wording itself what hearing is and what giving ear is. “Give ear” means: take it in with the ears. And “hear,” if it is said in contrast with “give ear,” may perhaps mean: take it into the mind. Among the things said in the Scriptures, some are more hidden and mysterious, and others are useful in themselves to those who understand. I think “hear” is said about the more hidden things, and “give ear” about those that are useful in themselves and can benefit the hearer even without interpretation. So if we examine the whole of Scripture, and prove ourselves skilled money-changers, we will say: this part calls for “hear,” and this part for “give ear.” Then, when we have listened and given ear, he commands us: “And do not be lifted up.” For “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.” And the Savior, when he says, “Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls,” teaches us not to be lifted up. Along with the other human evils, this sin is strong in us. Sometimes we are lifted up quite irrationally, over things we should not be lifted up about even in the smallest degree. At other times we are lifted up with some plausibility, because what we are proud of seems reasonable. Yet even being lifted up over that is not healthy.

^{8a} What I mean will become clear like this. Some people are puffed up because they are the sons of rulers, or because they come from a family with great worldly honors. People like that are puffed up over something that is not their own choice and makes no moral difference. They don’t even have a reasonable-sounding excuse to draw them toward pride. Others are puffed up because they have the power to put people to death. Others are puffed up be-

cause they have received what they call a “promotion” so high that they can cut off men’s heads. The “glory” of such people “is in their shame.” Others are puffed up over wealth, and not the true wealth but the wealth down here. Others, let us say, are puffed up because they own a beautiful house or many fields. None of these things is worth talking about, and no one should be puffed up over any of them. But there is a plausible case for being puffed up when someone is puffed up because he is wise. Or he is puffed up because he knows in his own conscience that for ten years now he has not touched sexual pleasure, or has not touched it since boyhood. Or another man is puffed up because he has worn chains for Christ’s sake. Here there is a plausibility that suggests it is reasonable to be puffed up. Yet even over these things, measured by the true account, no one is reasonably puffed up. So it is not reasonable to be puffed up even over these. Paul had material for being puffed up: the appearances, the visions, the wonders and signs, the labors he labored for Christ, and the churches he established. He was ambitious to lay the foundation of a church where Christ had not been named.

^{8b} All this was material for him, if one may speak with that plausibility about being puffed up, so that some people might have thought it right for him to be puffed up. But even so, since being puffed up over such things is not free of danger either, the good Father gave him visions and sights, and in the same way he gave him, as a kind of gift, “a messenger of Satan to strike him, so that he would not be exalted too highly. Three times he begged the Lord about this, that the messenger of Satan would leave him.” That messenger was given to him precisely so that he would not be puffed up. And the Lord answered him (for Paul was worthy of an answer from the Lord) and said to him: “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So there is nothing over which one should be puffed up. A fall follows being puffed up, as it says: “Before destruction a man’s heart is lifted up, and before glory it is humbled.” That is what I have to say on “Hear and listen, and do not be puffed up, for the Lord has spoken.”

⁹ Let us see also what he commands us to do after this. “Give,” he says, “glory to the Lord our God before it grows dark, before your feet stumble on dark mountains, and you wait for light.” He wants the one who gives “glory to God” to give “glory to God” while there is light, as if God’s glory could not be declared once darkness has fallen and it has become dark. So when does it grow dark, and when does the darkening not happen? “Work as

though the light is in you.” The light is in you if you have in you the one who said, “I am the light of the world.” As long as he rises for you, glorify God. But know that some darkening can come, and that this darkness must not remain. Before it grows dark, give glory to God. ^{10a} Perhaps we will understand what is written if we use a saying from the Gospel, spoken by the Savior, which goes like this: “Work while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” There he called this present age “day.” (I had to add “there,” because I know that “day” is used of other things in other places.) So he called this present age “day,” and he called the end of the age “darkness” and “night,” because of the punishments. For the prophet Amos says, “Why do you long for the day of the Lord? It too is darkness and not light.” Consider what is grim after the end of the world, what follows when almost the whole human race is being punished for its sins. You will see that then the surrounding air has grown dark, and no one can any longer glorify God. Even to the righteous the word of God gives this command: “Go, my people, enter into your chamber, shut your door, hide yourself for a little, just a little, until the fury of my anger passes by.” At the same time, if anyone is able, let him pay attention to what is said here: “a little, just a little.” But that “little” is little to God; it is not little to a human being. For we must see that to each creature there is something small and something great. Let me show by an example that for each one something is small or great.

^{10b} For any living creature, a certain amount of food is small compared with the size of its body, and a certain amount is large compared with its build. So what is small to a human being is great to another creature. What is small to a grown man, say, is a lot to a child. In the same way, the whole span of human life, even of a long-lived man, is a short time compared with the whole age of the universe as it now stands. So too, what is small to God is a great deal to us, and God’s “little” is a whole age. If it is said, then, “Go, my people, enter into your chambers, shut your door, hide yourself for a little, just a little,” we must suppose that the “little” is spoken not in relation to the one who is told to go and enter his chambers, but in relation to the one who gives the command, to whom what is much for the other is small. For if some people must enter their chambers “until the fury of the anger” of God passes by, and there are some whose sins are not forgiven, not only throughout this whole age but also throughout the whole age to come, then it is clear that the “little” stretches out to cover what has been said.

¹¹ “Give glory, then, to the Lord our God.” How do we give glory to the Lord our God? I do not look for giving glory to the Lord our God in voices and little phrases. The one who gives glory to the Lord our God gives it to him in deeds. Glorify God in self-control, in righteousness, in doing good. Give glory to God in courage and endurance. Give glory to God in godliness, in holiness, and in the other virtues. But if this is so, and this is how someone glorifies God, then if I say the opposite, do not think that I am blaspheming, for I will bring Scripture forward as a witness for those things too. The self-controlled person glorifies God; the one who lives without restraint dishonors God. For such a person tears down the temple of God as Nebuchadnezzar did, and “destroys the temple of God,” and “through breaking the law dishonors God.” (This last is also an apostolic saying.) So the sinner puts dishonor on God. Questions about providence are raised too, so that some doubt whether there is providence at all, and the cause is nothing other than wickedness. Take wickedness away, and you do not stumble over providence. Those who stumble over providence say, over and over, things like this: “Why are there so many adulterers and so many effeminate men? Why are there so many godless and ungodly people?” And it is those who sin who have produced the dishonor to providence, the stumbling blocks to God, and the blasphemy against the creator of the world. Some, then, do give glory to God, but those who by their sins do the opposite of what is for God’s glory do not give him glory.

^{12a} “Give glory to the Lord our God before it grows dark, before your feet stumble on dark mountains.” There are dark mountains, and there are mountains full of light. Which is which? The holy angels of God are mountains of light, and so are the prophets, Moses the servant, and the apostles of Jesus Christ. All these are bright mountains, and I think the Psalms speak of them: “His foundations are in the holy mountains.” What, then, are the dark mountains? They are those who raise up high things against the knowledge of God. The devil is a dark mountain. The rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing, are dark mountains. The demon that caused the epileptic fit was also a mountain, and a dark one. The Savior said of it, “You will say to this mountain.” The question was about the epileptic spirit. The disciples said, “Why could we not cast it out?” and the Savior answered, “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain,” the one you brought up, the one you asked about, “you will say to this

mountain: Move from here to there, and it will move.” “From here” means from the man; “to there” means to its own place. So those who stumble do not stumble on mountains of light but on dark mountains, when they come to be with the devil and his angels, the dark mountains. “And you will wait for light.” This phrase can be joined with “Give glory to the Lord our God.” If you give glory to the Lord our God before it grows dark, before your feet stumble on dark mountains, then clearly, even if darkness falls, “you will wait for the light,” and the light will take you up. Someone else might say, though I do not know whether he understands it soundly or not, that even those who stumble on dark mountains will wait among the dark mountains, waiting for the light of mercy. For this, he thinks, would be the meaning of “and you will wait for light.”

^{12b} But when someone has come to the dark mountains, let us see what is there: “the shadow of death.” Where the dark mountains are, the shadow of death arises from the dark mountains themselves. 13. “And they will be set in darkness.” “But if you do not listen in a hidden way, your soul will weep before the face of insolence.” Of those who hear, some hear in a hidden way, and others, even if they hear, do not hear in a hidden way. What is it, then, to hear in a hidden way? It is what is meant by “But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God foreordained before the ages for our glory.” And elsewhere it is said again that “most of God’s works are in hidden things.” When I hear the law, either I hear it in a hidden way or I do not. The Jew does not hear the law in a hidden way. That is why he is circumcised openly, not knowing that “the Jew is not the one who is so openly, nor is circumcision the outward one in the flesh.” But the one who hears about circumcision in a hidden way will be circumcised in secret. The one who hears in a hidden way what is laid down about the Passover eats from the lamb, Christ, for “Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.” He knows what the flesh of the Word is like, and knows that it is “true food,” and he shares in it. For he heard about the Passover in a hidden way. But this great crowd of Jews killed the Lord Jesus for this reason, and is guilty even today of the murder of Jesus: they did not hear the law or the prophets in a hidden way. If you read about the unleavened bread, you can hear the commandment in a hidden way, or you can hear it openly. Those of you (for the Passover is near) who keep unleavened bread in the bodily sense do not hear the

commandment that says, “If you do not listen in a hidden way, your soul will weep.”

^{12c} The same is true of the Sabbath. Women who have not heard the prophet “in a hidden way” do not hear in a hidden way; they hear only on the surface. They do not bathe on the Sabbath day. They go back “to the poor and weak elements,” as though Christ had never come among us, he who brings us to maturity and carries us over from the elements of the law to the perfection of the gospel. So let us take care when we read the law and the prophets, so that we do not fall under the prophecy that says, “But if you do not listen in a hidden way, your soul will weep because of the insult.” Some of you keep the Jewish fast, not understanding it, and observe the day of atonement even after the coming of Jesus Christ. You have not heard about the atonement in a hidden way, but only on the surface. To hear about the atonement in a hidden way is to hear how God [set forth] Jesus as an atonement for our sins, and that “he himself is the atonement for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” Even when the parables of the gospel are read, if the hearer is one of those “outside,” he will not hear them in a hidden way. But if the hearer is an apostle, or one of those who go in “to the house” of Jesus, he comes to Jesus and asks about the obscurity of the parable, and Jesus explains it. Then that hearer of the gospel hears it in a hidden way, so that his soul will not weep. For the soul weeps for those who do not hear in a hidden way. Notice how wonderfully he did not say, “You will weep, if you do not hear in a hidden way,” but, “Your soul will weep.” There is a weeping of the soul alone, a soul weeping by itself. Perhaps that is the weeping the Savior teaches us about when he says, “There will be the weeping.” And when he says, “Woe to those who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep,” he speaks of that same weeping, which the prophet also threatens here when he says, “But if you do not listen in a hidden way, your soul will weep because of the insult.”

^{12d} For when you are insulted, then you will weep, and your eyes will pour down tears, “because the Lord’s flock has been broken.” Suppose someone now looks at the state of the Jews and compares it with their ancient condition. He will see how “the Lord’s flock was broken.” For this people was once the Lord’s flock, and because they judged themselves unworthy, the word turned to the Gentiles. So if that flock of the Lord was broken, should we not fear even more, we who are the wild olive, grafted contrary to its nature

into the cultivated olive of the fathers, that this “flock of the Lord” may also be broken? For it is going to be broken at some time, according to what the Savior said, when “because lawlessness increases, the love of the many will grow cold.” Of whom is this said? Is it not said of those called Christians, “the love of the many will grow cold”? Of whom is it said, “when the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find faith on the earth?” Is it not about us? Therefore let us pay attention to ourselves in everything we do, so that day by day this flock of God may be improved, healed and cared for, and every brokenness may be removed from our souls. So may we be brought to perfection in Christ Jesus, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 13

^{1a} We want to understand the words spoken to Jerusalem, with all their heavy threat, in this way: “Who will spare you, Jerusalem? Or who will look sorrowful over you? Or who will turn back to ask after your peace? You have turned away from me, says the Lord. You will go backward. I will stretch out my hand against you and destroy you, and I will not let you go any more. And I will scatter them in a dispersion.” Then: “I have been made childless.” I am at a loss over this, so I take an example. Suppose someone has been proved an enemy of the king who reigns on earth. It is not permitted to show mercy to such a man, so that no one may seem to offend the king who condemned him. Some go further: it is not allowed even to share in showing pity to him. They will not even look sorrowful over him, so that by looking sorrowful they may not seem to be displeased with the one the king has judged. If you have understood this, then look at the man condemned by God because of his many sins, and consider him. There are legions of angels appointed to help human nature, yet no one has mercy on him. For each of the angels sees that the one who condemned him is God. He sees that the one who was turned away from is the Creator. He sees that the nature of the sins is such that the good God was compelled, so to speak, to bring the sentence against the one who sinned. So each of those who see it does not spare him, does not look sorrowful, does not show mercy, does not come back to plead for peace with such a man. So let this Jerusalem (for it will be called so because of the letter) sin against me, and let it do such things that Jesus says of it: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

1b Look, your house is left to you.” Let this Jerusalem be left, as it has been left. Let the angels who always helped Jerusalem, through whom even the law of Moses was ordained, “ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator,” leave Jerusalem and say: Its sins have become great. They killed Jesus. They laid their hands on Christ. If the sins had still been smaller, we could still have appealed and pleaded for them. We could have spared Jerusalem. But who will spare it over this? “If a man sins against a man, they will pray for him. But if he sins against the Lord, who will pray for him?” “Jerusalem has sinned a sin, therefore it has become an object of tossing and shaking.” And it is said to this very city first: “Who will spare you, Jerusalem? And who will look sorrowful over you?” We do not look sorrowful over Jerusalem and its misfortunes, or over what has happened to that whole people. For through their transgression salvation has come to us, to make them jealous. Their transgression became so great a sin that the voice of the Lord said: “Who then will spare you?” And I too say to the city that killed my Jesus: “Who will spare you, Jerusalem? And who will look sorrowful over you?”

2 I now move on from the letter. I have trained myself [in the way the Word gave], and I turn to every soul already counted worthy to see peace. After the divine lessons you have become Jerusalem, though before you were Jebus. The history says that its name was Jebus, and that it later changed its name to Jerusalem. The children of the Hebrews say that Jebus means “Trodden Down.” So Jebus, the soul trodden down by opposing powers, has been changed and has become Jerusalem, “Vision of Peace.” Suppose that, after changing from Jebus into Jerusalem, you sinned. Suppose you trampled the Son of God, as that Jerusalem did, and counted the blood of the new covenant common, and lived in grievous sins. Then it will be said of you also: “Who will spare you, Jerusalem? And who will look sad over you?” That is what will be said if you become the kind of person who betrays Jesus. Each of us, when he sins, and above all when he sins greatly, sins against Jesus. And if he is also an apostate, he does to Jesus in spirit, and all the more, what Jerusalem did to him in the body. Therefore: “How much worse a punishment do you think he will be counted worthy of, who has trampled the Son of God, and counted common the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” If you have trampled the Son of God and insulted the Spirit of grace, “who will spare you? Who will look sad over you? Who will turn back to ask about what makes for your peace?” The sinner’s

soul has betrayed the very Son of God, who asked about what makes for your peace. Who, then, can turn back again and plead for peace? We know that it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and who tasted the good word of God and the powers of the coming age, and then fell away, to be renewed again to repentance. They crucify the Son of God again in themselves and hold him up to public shame. So let us do everything we can so that it is not said of us: “Who will spare you, Jerusalem? And who will look sad over you? Or who will turn back to ask about peace for you?”

3a The next words fit either interpretation of Jerusalem: “You turned away from me, says the Lord. You will go backward.” Why say more about the fact that you turned away from the Son of God, and that by turning away from the Son of God you turned away from God? The Jerusalem in Judea turned away from Christ, and by it we must understand all the Jews. That is why “you will go backward.” There was a time when it did not go backward but forward. Now it goes backward: “and they turned in their hearts to Egypt,” clearly so as to go backward. What does “you will go backward” mean, and what does it mean to stretch forward to what lies ahead? We will explain it this way. The righteous man stretches forward to what lies ahead, [forgetting] what lies behind. Clearly, the one who is the opposite of the righteous man remembers what lies behind and does not stretch forward. And whoever remembers what lies behind refuses to listen to Jesus when he teaches and says: “Let him not turn back to the things behind to take his cloak.” He refuses to listen to Jesus when he says: “Remember Lot’s wife.” He refuses to listen to Jesus when he says: “No one who puts his hand to the plough and turns back to the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God.” It is also written in the Law that the angels said to Lot, who was leaving Sodom: “Do not look back at the things behind, and do not stand anywhere in all the surrounding country. Save yourself on the mountain.”

3b “...lest you be swept away with them.” This also has a meaning worthy of an angelic spirit: “Do not look back.” Always stretch forward to what lies ahead. You have left Sodom; do not turn back toward Sodom. You have left wickedness and sin; do not return to them. “Do not stand anywhere in the surrounding region.” Even if you keep the first command, “Do not look back,” that is not enough for you to be saved unless you also obey the second command: “Do not stand anywhere in the surrounding region.” Someone

who has begun to make progress must not stand in the region around Sodom, even if he has passed through Sodom itself. Having passed through, he must go on from standing in the surrounding region and be saved on the mountain, as it says: “Do not look back, and do not stand anywhere in the surrounding region; escape to the mountain, lest you be swept away with them.” If you do not want to be swept away with the Sodomites, never turn back, do not stand in the region around Sodom, and do not go anywhere else except to the mountain. For only there is it possible to be saved. The mountain is the Lord Jesus, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 14

¹ Doctors of the body spend their time with the sick. They give themselves constantly to caring for the sick, as the purpose of the medical art requires. They see dreadful things and touch unpleasant ones. From other people’s misfortunes they harvest sorrows of their own, and their whole life is spent in difficult circumstances. They are never with the healthy, but always with the wounded, with those who have spreading ulcers, with those full of pus, fevers and every kind of disease. And if someone wants to practice medicine, he will not be vexed, nor neglect the purpose of the art he has taken up, when he is among such people as I have described. I have said this by way of introduction because the prophets too are, as it were, doctors of souls, and they always spend their time where those who need healing are. “For those who are well,” it says, “have no need of a doctor, but those who are ill.” What doctors suffer from undisciplined patients, the prophets and teachers suffer from those who do not want to be healed. They are hated because they give orders contrary to the sick people’s chosen desires, as though they were forbidding pleasure and indulgence to people who, even in their sickness, do not want to receive what their sicknesses deserve. So the undisciplined among the sick run away from their doctors. Often they even abuse them and speak evil of them and do whatever an enemy would do to an enemy. They forget that the doctors come as friends. They look only at the hardship of the diet and at the pain of the doctor’s iron instrument, not at the end that comes after the pain. They hate the doctors as though they were only fathers of pains, and not of pains that lead the patients to health.

² That people was sick, then. There were all kinds of diseases among the people who bore God’s name. God sent them doctors, the prophets. Jeremiah was one of these doctors. He rebuked those who were sinning, wanting to

turn back those who were doing wrong. But when they ought to have listened to what he said, they accused the prophet, and they accused him before judges just like themselves. The prophet was always in lawsuits, brought by people who, as far as his prophecy went, might have been healed, but were not healed because of their own disobedience. Over these things he sometimes says: "And I said, I will not speak, and I will not name the name of the Lord. And it became like a burning fire blazing in my bones, and I am worn out on every side and cannot bear it." At other times, seeing himself always in court, abused, accused and falsely testified against, he says: "Woe is me, mother, that you bore me as what?" He called himself a man who does not judge but is judged, who does not decide but is contended against "by the whole earth." And since the sick would not listen to his good and medical counsel, he says: "I have not helped." And since, though he lent them spiritual silver, they did not want to hear what he said, so that they might profit from what they heard, he says: "No one has owed me anything, and I have not owed anyone."

³ But I said these things ahead of time, before explaining the words "I have not owed, and no one has owed me." The reading comes in two forms. In most copies it is "I have not helped, and no one has helped me." But in the most accurate copies, which agree with the Hebrew, it is "I have not owed, and no one has owed me." So I must explain the reading that is well worn and in circulation in the churches, and I must not leave unexplained the reading that comes from the Hebrew Scriptures. So then, he proclaimed the word, and no one accepted what was said. It was like a physician who used up his medicines on patients who were undisciplined and kept indulging their own desires. It is as if he said, "I have not helped, and no one has helped me." Perhaps there is a kind of mutual response, owing to the kindness of the one who has been helped toward the one who helped him. So the speaker too comes to be helped, since "blessed is the one who speaks into the ears of those who listen." In this way, then, a teacher would be helped by hearers who are advancing and improving; he would be helped by having fruits among them. [Having no such help from the Jews, Jeremiah says:] "No one has helped me." For suppose the speaker ought to have fruit among his hearers, but the hearer turns aside and stays outside what is said. Then it is said, "No one has helped me." For he does not receive the help he would have received if the hearer, once helped, had become a cause of progress and blessedness to the one who

helped him. And in another way, too, every teacher, in the very act of teaching, is helped in what he teaches and what he learns, the more intelligent his pupil is. Those who speak become stronger in the lessons they pass on when the hearers are intelligent and do not simply accept them, but test them in return, ask questions, and examine the meaning of what is said. [So I have not helped, and no one has helped me.]

⁴ But since another explanation is also necessary, because the more accurate copies read “I have not owed, and no one has owed me,” let us explain the passage in that form as well. Consider the person who pays everyone what is owed: fear to the one due fear, tax to the one due tax, tribute to the one due tribute, honor to the one due honor. He gives everyone what is fitting, so that he owes no one the duties he should do. He honors parents as parents, so to speak, brothers as brothers, sons as sons, bishops as bishops, presbyters as presbyters, deacons as deacons, believers as believers, catechumens as catechumens. If he pays all that is fitting, he has not owed. But if he owes a fitting duty and has not done it, he cannot say, “I have not owed,” for he owed and did not pay. How then shall I explain “and no one has owed me”? I was lending, and I wanted to give the spiritual money. But they turned away from what was said and did not make themselves ready to receive, so that they might owe. For this reason no one owed me. For who accepted what was said, so that by accepting it he would become a debtor for what he heard, and be required, as a debtor, to pay interest on what was said? In this respect, then, it is better for the hearer to receive rational silver from the speaker and owe, than not to accept and not to receive, and so not to owe. For “no one has owed me” is also set down as a charge against them.

^{5a} “Woe is me, mother, that you bore me as a man of lawsuit and dispute to all the earth.” I do not think this fits the other prophets as it fits Jeremiah. Most of the prophets began to prophesy after some time had passed, after a change that followed their wickedness and sins. Jeremiah, though, prophesies from childhood. We can give an example from what is written. Isaiah did not hear, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you; I have made you a prophet to the nations.” Nor did he say, “I do not know how to speak, because I am too young.” But when he saw the vision recorded in his prophecy, he saw it and said, “Woe to me, wretched man, for I have unclean lips and I live among a people with unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Sabaoth.”

He says, "One of the Seraphim was sent to me, and touched my lips and said: See, I have taken away your lawless deeds, and this will cleanse your sins." So it was after the sins he had committed earlier that Isaiah was later made worthy of the Holy Spirit and prophesied. You could find something similar in the case of another prophet. Jeremiah was not like this. Adorned with the prophetic Spirit even from his swaddling clothes, he prophesied from childhood. So he said (I am explaining the plain sense first): "Woe is me, mother, that you bore me as a man of lawsuit and dispute to all the earth." One of those before me made a comment on this passage, saying that he spoke these words not to his bodily mother but to the mother who gives birth to prophets.

^{5b} Who gives birth to prophets, if not the wisdom of God? So he was saying, "Woe is me, mother"; "to what sort of man did you bear me, O Wisdom?" The children of wisdom are also recorded in the Gospel: "And wisdom sends out her children." So the meaning is: "Woe is me, my mother Wisdom, that you bore me as a man of lawsuit. Who am I, that I have been born to such a destiny, to be put on trial and in dispute because of my rebukes, my reproaches and my teaching, before all who are on the earth?" If Jeremiah says this, "that you bore me as a man of lawsuit and dispute to all the earth," I cannot explain the words "to all the earth." Jeremiah was not in dispute with all the earth. Or shall we force the sense and say that "all the earth" means "all Judea"? For his prophecy, as he prophesied then, did not reach the whole earth. But perhaps, as I have shown in countless other places that the name Jeremiah was spoken in place of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall say the same here too. At the beginning I noted the words: "See, I have set you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and to tear down and to destroy and to build and to plant." Jeremiah did not do this. But Jesus Christ uprooted the kingdoms of the [earth's] sins, tore down the buildings of wickedness, and in place of those kingdoms made righteousness and truth reign [in us], in our souls. Just as those words fit better when applied to Christ than to Jeremiah, so I think many other words do too, and these as well.

^{6a} First we must ask about the cry "Woe is me." Because the words sound so ill-omened, can the Savior say it, when he himself pities others with a "woe"? I will show from words everyone accepts, words that suit no one but the Savior, how he even wept over Jerusalem. Now "Woe is me" is the voice of someone weeping. And it is written in the Gospel that when he saw Jerus-

alem he wept over it and said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children together," and so on. These other words, too, were plainly spoken by the Savior in the cry: "Woe is me, for I have become like one gathering stubble at harvest, and like a gleaner at the grape harvest, when there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripened fruit. Woe, my soul, for the devout man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. All of them are on trial for blood." For he came to the harvest to reap, and he finds many sinners, and says, "Woe is me, for I have become like one gathering stubble at harvest." He came to gather the fruit of life among men, and he finds many sins in us, and so he says, "and like a gleaner at the grape harvest, when there is no cluster to eat, no first-ripened fruit."

^{6b} Elsewhere he says something similar to these words, speaking to the Father: "What profit is there in my blood, in my going down to corruption?" What good have I done for human beings, great as it was? What have they done that is worth the blood I poured out for them? "What profit is there in my blood, in my going down" from the heavens? I came down, I came to the earth, I gave myself up to corruption, I put on a human body. What worthwhile thing has been set right among men? "What profit is there in my blood, in my going down to corruption? Will dust confess you, or declare your truth?" So then, is the first thing the Savior says here, "Woe is me, mother, that you bore me as a man of strife," of the same kind? The Savior does not say "Woe is me, mother" as God, but as man, as in the prophet: "Woe, my soul, for the devout man has perished from the earth." His soul was a human soul; for that reason it was troubled, and for that reason it was deeply grieved. But the Word who was in the beginning with God was not troubled; he would not say "Woe." For the Word does not admit death. It is the human nature that admitted it, as we have often shown.

⁷ "Mother, why did you bear me as a man put on trial and judged in all the earth?" If you will look with me at the martyrs everywhere, brought to trial and standing before judges in every church, you will see how Jesus Christ is tried in each of the martyrs. For he is the one on trial in those who bear witness to the truth. You will be persuaded to accept this when you notice that he does not say you are in prison when you are in prison, but himself; not you who are hungry when you are hungry, but himself; not you who are thirsty, but himself. "I was in prison and you came to me. I was hungry

and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.” So then, even if a Christian is put on trial for no other reason, not for his own sins but because he is a Christian, it is Christ who is on trial. Christ Jesus is therefore on trial in all the earth. As often as a Christian is tried, it is Christ who is on trial. And not only in these courts. Suppose a Christian is slandered, accused falsely of something; even then Christ is unjustly tried. “Mother, why did you bear me as a man put on trial and judged in all the earth?”

8 And here is another way to understand how he is “judged and contended over in all the earth.” Who does not put the Christian message on trial? Which of the nations does not at least examine it in some fashion? Which of the Jews does not have something to say about Christians? Which of the Greeks? Which of the philosophers? Which of the ordinary people? Everywhere Jesus is tried and judged. Some condemn him, and others do not condemn him. If you do not condemn him, he becomes welcome: you open the windows to him, he comes in to you; you believe in him, and he dines with you. But if you hear about Christianity and refuse to accept it, you have done nothing other than condemn Jesus as a liar, as one who led people astray, as one who does not speak the truth, because you have not believed the word he teaches. “Why did you bear me, mother, as a man being judged and contended over in all the earth?” Those who are completely unbelieving condemn him. Those who do not disbelieve but are in doubt about him are divided over him. Jesus suffers two things among human beings: by the unbelieving he is condemned, and by the double-minded he is contended over. If you put on “the image of the heavenly one” and lay aside “the image of the earthly one,” you are not the earth that condemns him. You are not the earth in which he is condemned. You are no longer earth, contending over him.

9 “My strength has failed among those who curse me.” The apostle says of the Savior that “he was crucified out of weakness.” And the prophet says things much like this: “Lord, who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? We proclaimed before him like a child, like a root in a thirsty land. We saw him, and he had no form or beauty, but his form was without honor, lacking beside the sons of men. He was a man in affliction and in toil, who knew how to bear weakness, because his face was turned away from dishonor; he was dishonored and not esteemed. He bears our lawless deeds and suffers pain for us, and we considered him to be in toil and in affliction and in ill-treatment. But he was wounded

for our lawless deeds, and made weak for our sins. The discipline that brings our peace was upon him; by his bruise we were healed.” So he took up the weakness of our sins and bore us, and he came to those who cursed him. As he came down from heaven, his strength failed among those who cursed him. For at the same time he took the form of a slave and emptied himself, as the apostle said: “he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.” So he says, “My strength has failed among those who curse me.”

¹⁰ Let us see whether, if the Word himself grants it, we can say something clearer than what has been said on the words, “My strength has failed among those who curse me.” “There was the true light, which lights every person coming into the world.” The “true light” is the Son of God, “who lights every person coming into the world.” Whoever is rational shares in the true light, and every human being is rational. Now among all the people who share in the Word, in some the strength of the Word has grown, and in others it fails. If you see a soul that is ruled by passions and sinful, you will see there the strength of the Word failing. But if you see a holy and righteous soul, you will see the strength of the Word bearing fruit day by day, and you will apply to the righteous what was said about Jesus. For it is not only in himself that “Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and people.” In each of those who receive advancement in wisdom, stature and grace, “Jesus” also advances “in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and people.” So the Word, the Son of God, who is in the one who said, “Woe is me, mother,” and so on, says, “My strength has failed among those who curse me.” Whoever curses the Word immediately receives punishment for cursing the Word and finding fault with the teaching of Jesus. For the strength of Jesus fails in such a person, and there is no strength of the Word in him. Then again, from the opposite side: if you bless Jesus and receive him, his strength experiences the opposite of what it suffered among those who curse him. As it failed there among those who cursed, so here it grows among those who bless.

¹¹ “May it be so, Lord, as they are set straight. Did I not stand before you in the time of their evils?” What is the meaning of “May it be so, Lord”? Let anyone who can gather this out for himself. “Master and Lord, as they are set straight,” let it be so: let the strength be failing among those who curse, when, after speaking evil of me, they repent, turn to the straight way, and walk it. “May it be so, Master, as they are set straight. Did I not stand before

you?” Then he defends himself concerning those who slander him, saying, “Did I not stand before you in the time of their evils?” He stood before the Father, being “the propitiation for our sins,” and he pleaded for them in the very time of our evils. For he did not stand before him after the time of our evils; rather, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “Did I not stand before you in the time of their evils, in the time of their afflictions, for good things toward the enemy?” He says: in the time of their affliction, the affliction they suffered from the enemy, I stood before you on their behalf. Who is the enemy but “our adversary the devil,” who afflicted us? And clearly, in the time of that enemy’s hostility against human beings, our Savior stood before the Father and pleaded for our captivity, so that we might be ransomed and rescued from the enemy. Let the Savior, or the prophet, have said these things. For the prophet too could have said such things and prayed them on behalf of the people “in the time of their evils.”

12a After this, what does God answer to the people who were accused by the prophet, or by Christ? He says this to them: “Your strength is iron and a bronze covering.” That is, it is hard, unyielding, not to be driven. “Your strength is iron and a bronze covering” means that your strength is a kind of cutting and dividing strength, a strength that is not used for good. “And I will give your treasures for plunder, as an exchange for all your sins.” Which treasures of the sinners does God give “for plunder,” and give “as an exchange for all their sins”? Is it the treasures they store up for themselves on earth? Every person stores up treasure. If he is worthless, he stores it on earth. If he is good, he stores it in heaven, as we were taught from the Gospel. Or is God saying to that people, “Because of your sins I am going to give your treasures for plunder”? Then which treasures of that people were given for plunder? Look: Jeremiah was one of the treasures, Isaiah another, and Moses was a treasure too. God took these treasures from that people and gave them to us, through Christ, who said, “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that produces its fruits.” So “because of your sins I will give your treasures for plunder.” And he did give the treasures of that people to us. They were the first to be entrusted with the oracles of God. Then after them we were entrusted, when the oracles of God were taken from them and given to us. And we say that the saying “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that produces its fruits” was spoken by the Savior and has been fulfilled. It is not that the Scripture

was taken from them. It is that they no longer possess the law and the prophets, because they do not see the meaning in them.

^{12b} For they do have the books. But how was the kingdom of God taken from them? The meaning of the Scriptures was taken from them. No longer is there kept among them any [legal] explanation or [prophetic ...] concerning the coming of Christ. "I said to that people: You will hear with your ears and never understand, and you will look and look and never see. For the heart of this people has grown fat." What Isaiah said has also been fulfilled: "The Lord will take away from Judea and from Jerusalem the strong man and the strong woman, the giant and the man of war, the judge and the prophet and the diviner, the wise master builder and the understanding listener." God took all these things away from them, and gave them to us who are from the nations, if only we will receive them. All this is because of the words, "And I will give your treasures for plunder." "An exchange for all your sins, and in all your borders." It is as if he were saying: because of your sins, which have reached to all your borders. For there is no border of that people that has not been filled with sin. And how could every border of theirs not be filled with sin, when they, as far as it lay in them, killed righteousness, if Christ is righteousness, killed wisdom, if Christ is wisdom, and killed truth, if Christ is truth? By condemning the Son of God to death, they threw away and lost all these things. And when my Lord Jesus rose from the dead, he never again appeared to those who had killed him. We do not have it in the history that he appeared to those who killed him. He appeared, risen from the dead, only to those who believed.

¹³ "And I will enslave you among all your enemies in a land you did not know." That people has been enslaved among its enemies, and has come to be in a land it did not know. "Because a fire has been kindled from my anger; it will burn against you." After this, the one who prayed earlier completes his prayer, after the threats spoken against the people, and joins these words to what came before: "You know, Lord; remember me and visit me, and clear me of those who pursue me, not in your patience." Let the prophet say this, since he was pursued by those he rebuked and hated by those who could not bear the truth. For he became an enemy to his hearers by telling them the truth. But let our Savior say the same, for he too was pursued by the people, and he says, "not in your patience." What does "not in your patience" mean? You have always been patient with the people over their sins; but over what

they have dared against me, do not be patient. And truly God was not patient. If you examine the times of the suffering and fall of Jerusalem and the razing of the city, and how God abandoned that people because they killed Christ, you will see that he no longer showed the people patience. If you wish, listen: from the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar to the razing of the temple, forty-two years were completed. For a short time had to be allowed for repentance, above all for the sake of those from the people who were going to believe because of the signs and wonders that would be done by the apostles.

^{14a} “Know that I have borne reproach for your sake from those who set aside your words.” Let this be the prophet, speaking and despised for what he said, set aside by sinners. For he himself says, “I have continually been mocked.” So he was reproached by those who set aside the words that God spoke through him, and because of the reproach he prays to be helped by God, saying, “Know that I have borne reproach for your sake from those who set aside your words; bring them to an end.” Let the prophet say it. But “bring them to an end” fits better when spoken by the Savior. For an end did come on Jerusalem and the people, because of what happened through the people’s plotting against our Savior. After this it is necessary, because the prophets suffered much in rebuking, in speaking on behalf of the word, and in receiving what God commanded, to remind the hearers of their way of life, of their promises, and of our own purpose. Then, as far as we are able, if we want to have rest with the prophets, we should strive to imitate the works of the prophets. What I mean is this. We often say in our prayers: “Almighty God, give us our portion with the prophets; give us our portion with the apostles of your Christ, so that we may be found with Christ himself.” But when we say this we do not realize what we are praying. For in effect we are saying: grant us to suffer what the prophets suffered; grant that we too be hated as the prophets were hated; give us such words that we will be hated for them; grant that we fall into as many trials as the apostles did. For to say “Give me a portion with the prophets,” when I have not suffered what the prophets suffered and do not even want to suffer it, is unjust. To say “Give me a portion with the apostles,” when I do not want to be able to say truthfully, from Paul’s own disposition, “in labors far more, in beatings far more, in imprisonments beyond measure, in deaths often,” and so on, is the most unjust thing of all.

14b So if we want to be with the prophets, look at the prophets' lives. They were brought to trial, cross-examined and condemned for rebuking, reproaching and reprimanding. "They were stoned, sawn in two, tested, they died by the slaughter of the sword, they went about in sheepskins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, wandering in deserts." This was at a time when the Jews had many synagogues. Yet these men were "wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and the holes of the earth." Why then is it strange if someone who wants to imitate the prophetic life is slandered, hated and plotted against for rebuking and reprimanding the sinner? The same thing had to happen in the church of God in the present case. The man who was condemned was condemned; so-and-so [sitting?] was doing such-and-such things. Church discipline had to take place, and it did. The one entrusted with the task did what he had to do. Now that man goes around speaking ill of the one who upheld the truth. But let us not do this. Let us not lend our ears to those who, because they have been expelled, speak ill of the one who expelled them or of the one who voted with him. [The text is corrupt here: something like "when injustice is exposed and has been done."] The wonderful apostles were insulted countless times for the truth, and they say, "I am content in weaknesses, in insults and necessities, in persecutions and distresses, for Christ." May I only know, when I am insulted, that I am insulted for no other reason than Christ. When I am in hardship, may I know that the cause of the hardship is Christ. When I am reviled, may I know that the reason for the reviling is nothing other than this: I uphold the truth and speak on behalf of what is written, so that everything may happen according to God's word. For this I am blasphemed. So let all of us, as far as we are able, hurry toward the prophetic life and the apostolic life, and not run away from what is troublesome. For an athlete who runs from the trouble of the contest will not receive the sweetness of the crown.

15 "And your word will be to me for gladness." It is not so now, but "will be." For at present your word brings me prisons, lawsuits, troubles, slander and labors. But the end of these things will be gladness. "And your word will be to me for gladness and the joy of my heart, because your name has been called upon me, Lord Almighty." Even when Christ is the speaker, the name of the Father has been called upon him. "I did not sit in the assembly of those who play." If the prophet ever saw an assembly of people who were not in earnest but playing, he avoided gathering with them rather than hurrying

to the gathering of those who play. So you need to understand the difference between an assembly of those who play and an assembly of those who are in earnest. This assembly here is in earnest. It does everything with earnestness and things worthy of earnestness, and, as the saying goes, its word is earnestness and its life is earnestness. It is wholly an assembly not of those who play but of those who are in earnest. But when an assembly abandons earnestness about what is necessary and spends its leisure on the games of this age and on games that come from wickedness, it becomes an assembly of those who play. So this man says, "I did not sit in the assembly of those who play, but I stood in awe before the face of your hand." Two choices lay before him. One was to sit in an assembly of those who play, to stumble against you, God, and not please you. The other was to rise from the assembly of those who play and do what was dear to you. He says: I chose rather to get up from the assembly of those who play and be your friend, than to do the opposite and become an enemy of your blessedness. "I did not sit in the assembly of those who play, but I stood in awe before the face of your hand." Our Saviour also did not sit "in the assembly of those who play," but withdrew from them. A sign that the Saviour rose up from an assembly of those who play is his saying: "Your house is left to you desolate." For the Word of God abandoned the council of the Jews and made for himself another council and a church, the one from the nations.

16a "I sat alone." Here too the words are fitting. When there is a crowd of sinners who cannot bear a righteous man living righteously, it is not out of place for him to flee the council of wickedness and imitate the one who said, "I sat alone." He may also imitate Elijah, who says, "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have dug down your altars, and I am left all alone, and they seek my life to take it." Perhaps, if you examine "I sat alone" more deeply, you will find a meaning worthy of the prophet's depth. When we imitate the life of the many, so that a person is not set apart, better than the many and distinguished from them, I cannot say, "I sat alone," but rather, "I sat with many." But when my life becomes hard to imitate, so that I become such a person that no one is like me in character, in speech, in actions, in wisdom, then, because I am alone in being such and no one imitates me, I can say, "I sat alone." So even if you are not a presbyter, not a bishop, and not honored with any church office, you may say this. Strive after "I sat alone," and take up a way of life that lets you say, "I sat alone." "For I was filled with

bitterness.” [If] “the way is narrow and hard,” is your feast kept with bitter herbs? For when you keep the feast, it says, “you shall eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs.”

^{16b} We must consider what the word means when it says that the one who keeps a feast to God must eat “unleavened bread with bitter herbs.” The apostle has explained the unleavened bread; the interpretation is not mine. But the interpretation that follows must necessarily be like the apostle’s explanation. The apostle explained the matter of the unleavened bread when he said, “Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” So we must give an account of the bitter herbs that fits with the unleavened bread being the bread of sincerity and truth. Have sincerity and truth, and there will be bitter herbs for you, and you will eat the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth with bitter herbs, as Paul did. Since he ate the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, he also ate bitter herbs. How did he eat bitter herbs? When he said, “I have become your enemy by telling you the truth.” How did he eat bitter herbs? “In toil and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, apart from the things I leave out.” Now the law said, “You shall eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs.” It did not say, “Eat unleavened bread with bitter herbs until you are full,” as it is said of certain other things: “You shall eat and be filled.” But the prophet intensifies it, saying that he did not merely eat bitterness but “was filled with bitterness.” As far as he was able, he shared in bitter experiences, so that he partook of the very fullest bitter herbs.

¹⁷ “Why do those who hate me prevail?” He had many troubles. He suffered from those who did not want to hear the truth, and they were stronger than he, here in this age. For the kingdom of God is not from this age but from better regions, as the Savior says: “If my kingdom were from this world, my servants would have fought, so that I would not be handed over to the Jews.” So those who grieved the prophet prevailed over him in this world. That they do prevail, look at the martyrs. The judge sits in judgment and lives in luxury in the courtroom. The Christian, in whom Christ is on trial, is filled with bitterness, is overpowered by the unjust man, and is condemned. ¹⁸ “My wound is hard; from where shall I be healed?” Those who overpower me strike me, and my wound is hard. The words may prophesy the cross of the Lord, for the cross is a hard wound, as far as those who

crucify him are concerned. Or they may be said about all the righteous, in whom he receives a hard wound. Or you may hear them as said about the prophet himself, who also suffered the things written in the prophecy. In every case the phrase “my wound is hard” carries the same sense. “From where shall I be healed?” Even if it is the Savior who says “from where shall I be healed?”, he is prophesying the resurrection from the dead after the hard wound. And if it is taken of the righteous man, there is healing again after the wounds. “It has become for me like deceitful water, which has no faithfulness.” For the wound does not remain; it passes away. “Therefore thus says the Lord: if you turn back, I will also restore you.” This is said again to each person whom God will call to turn back to him. And it seems to me that a mystery is hidden here in the words “I will restore you.” No one is restored to a place where he has never been at all; restoration is to what is one’s own. For example, if a member of my body is dislocated, the physician tries to bring about the restoration of the dislocated joint. When someone is outside his homeland, whether justly or unjustly, and receives back the ability to live again in his homeland according to its laws, he has been restored to his own homeland. Understand the same of a soldier who has been driven out of his own battle line and is restored to it. So here he is saying to us who have turned away that, if we turn back, he will restore us. For the end of the promise is of this kind, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles in the words “until the times of the restoration of all things that God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,” in Christ Jesus, to whom belong glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 15

¹Those who call the prophets blessed, and by calling them blessed pray to have a share with the prophets, should gather from the prophetic words the choice qualities of their prophesying. If they seek these out and live by them (even if it will seem hard to them in this life to imitate the prophetic life), they may be persuaded that they will obtain rest and blessedness with the prophets. There are many places from which one can gather the choice qualities of the prophets: their freedom, their vigor, their watchfulness, their alertness. Because of their freedom they did not worry about the dangers they fell into. They cared only to rebuke and to turn people back. The prophets did this by speaking the word of God boldly, with sharp reproof to those who sinned, even when those under rebuke seemed to have great power. Still,

even though one can do this from anywhere in the prophets, let us look at what was read today. The prophet rebuked many, and spoke to many. For he arose against people who had become sinners, as is plain from the fact that the captivity happened in his time. Having rebuked many, and been judged by many, he utters words like these.

² First let us look at this from the prophetic word itself, and then, by way of a higher reading, see whether it is a prophet's foretelling. "Woe is me, mother! To what sort of life did you bear me, a man at law and in dispute with the whole earth?" O mother, why did you bring me into the world as a man who goes to court against everyone on earth and is set in dispute against everyone on earth? For this prophet, like Isaiah and the rest, had the prophet's task laid before him: to teach, to rebuke and to turn people back. So this prophet too had it laid before him to judge between people and to rebuke. He was able to contend, and to be contended against, with sinners, and to expose the sins of the people. And what the people did to them, why should I even say? One they stoned, another they sawed in two, another they killed "between the temple and the altar," and this one, because he rebuked them, they threw into a pit of mud. Our Savior did the same thing toward them all, and did it better than they, as the Lord of the prophets. For indeed, though he was himself scourged, crucified and handed over by the Jews, or by the teachers of the Jews and the ruler of the people, he said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." And he adds to each charge "Woe," and "because of this," this and that. So we too, if we are eager for the blessings pronounced on the prophets, should do the same. Then, because we speak and are put on trial before many people, we may say, "Woe is me, mother! To what sort of life did you bear me, a man at law and in dispute with the whole earth?"

^{3a} This saying can apply more properly to the Savior. Suppose we grant that the prophet says it. Still he will not say it truly, but perhaps by exaggeration, for he was not in dispute with the whole earth. But if I come to my Savior and Lord, and above all because of the words "he will come into judgment" and "that you may be justified in your words, and may prevail when you are judged," I will see that my Savior and Lord is going to stand before the Father, judged along with all of us human beings. And he is judged along with all people. I say he is judged, he too is examined. He stood as one who vindicates the truth, not as an accuser. "Woe is me, mother! To what sort of life did you bear me, a man at law and in dispute with the whole earth?" A

prophet cannot say “the whole earth.” But some who love our Lord are indignant and say that the Savior does not say this, that the voice does not fit the Son of God. We must show, then, that “Woe is me, mother” is not foreign to the Son of God. “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death,” and “my soul is troubled,” and in the same way what is said in the prophets, as here: “Woe is me, mother! To what sort of life did you bear me, a man at law and in dispute with the whole earth,” or when the gleaning is lost, so that no cluster can be found: “Woe, my soul, for the devout man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among people.”

^{3b} Who is it that says there, “Alas, for I have become like one gathering stubble at harvest”? Did the prophet gather, and does he want to gather? Does the prophet have a field? No. Gathering everything from the harvest and from what has been sown belongs to no one except the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There are many fallen among the nations, and among us too there are sins. So he says, “Alas for me, for I have become like one gathering stubble.” Let each of us examine himself. Is he an ear of grain? Will the Son of God find in him something to gather or to reap? We will find that some of us are wind-blasted. Perhaps we have a little left in us, two or three grains, and our sins are many against us. So when he sees the churches, those that bear the name, full of sinners, he says, “Alas, for I have become like one gathering stubble at harvest and like a gleaning at the grape harvest.” He came looking for fruit in the vineyard. Each of us is planted [. . .], and as a vine “in a fertile place.” “He brought a vine out of Egypt.” “I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true.” He comes and looks for something to gather. He finds a bit of gleaning and a few small clusters, not flourishing and not many. Which of us has clusters of virtue? Which of us has the fruits of God? “O Lord our God, how wonderful is your name in all the earth.”

⁴ Let this be said by way of a digression, on the words “Alas for me, mother.” My point is that it is not foreign to the divinity of our Savior, as he looks at the sins of human beings, to say “Alas” now. He says it not as God but as man, not as wisdom but as soul. That is why I set beside it that prophetic word: “Alas, my soul, for the devout man has perished from the earth, and there is none among men who acts uprightly.” The blessed soul came into human life and took a body for the sake of human beings. If he sees our sins, he says to the Father, “What profit is there in my blood, in my going down into corruption? Will dust confess you?” But let him not say “Alas”

over us. Let the angels of heaven not say it over us. If our Savior says “Alas,” they will say “Alas” too. They are not greater than our Savior, and they also see our failings. But blessed are those over whom the angels will not say “Alas,” but who are counted blessed. For “there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine who have no need of repentance.” This is said by way of comfort. “Alas for me, mother, what kind of man did you bear me to be?” Whom does he mean by mother? Among women, could he mean the soul, and Mary? But if someone accepts the saying, “Just now my mother, the Holy Spirit, took me and carried me up to the great mountain, Tabor,” and what follows, he can see his mother in that. “Alas for me, mother, what kind of man did you bear me to be, a man in dispute and in judgment in all the earth?” He is brought to trial before all the earth and is examined, and he will say to each person: “I did this and this. My dispensation accomplished this and this, and I endured for your salvation.” When the Savior says these things, what shall we do? For he is going to be examined in all the earth.

5 Next I want to look at what follows. By one line of interpretation it can refer to the prophet, and it can also refer to the Savior. Let us look at the next words: “I have not owed, and no one has owed me.” “The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me.” And truly he did not owe. But each of us is a debtor through our sins, a debtor who holds a written bond. [The text is damaged here: after his bond was wiped out, how many bonds have they made?] “He who did no sin, and in whose mouth no deceit was found” made no bond. What does “no one has owed me” mean? How shall we explain “no one has owed me” in the case of the Savior? Even if we read it this way, we should know that most copies of the Septuagint edition do not have it so. Later we examined the other editions as well, and we recognized it as a scribe’s error. [The Greek here is corrupt: “yet to me not even one”?] So no one owed him, because he forgave everyone their debts. “A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Since they had nothing to pay back, he forgave them both.” Do you want to see the two debtors, the one who owes five hundred and the one who owes fifty? People from two peoples have believed in God. The people from the Jews, who do not believe in Christ, owe the fifty. Perhaps we from the nations, who had become the most ungodly of all, owe the five hundred. That is the point of what is said about that repentant prostitute. Someone might ask

how the five hundred applies to her. It comes from the words “what sort of woman is this who is touching him,” in answer to which he said to Simon, “A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty,” and so on. I had to explain all this to you because of the words “I have not owed, and no one has owed me.” “I have not owed, and no one has owed me; my strength has failed among those who curse me.” Even if he died “from weakness, yet he lives by the power of God.”

^{6a} After many words had passed, there was more to say about each of the things already mentioned, but time does not allow it. So let us speak on the next passage that was read: “Cursed is the man who has his hope in man.” [The text is damaged here] aimed at those who think that the Savior, the Son of God, was a man. For along with their many other human evils, they have dared to say this too: that he is not God, “the only-begotten,” “the firstborn of all creation.” For “cursed is whoever has his hope in man.” Clearly those who put their hope in a man are cursed. I would say: I do not put my hope in a man. Hoping in Christ Jesus, I know no man. Not only do I know no man, but I know wisdom, righteousness itself, the one through whom “all things were created” [in the authorities; the Greek here is uncertain]. “Cursed is the man who has his hope in man.” Even if the Savior bears witness that the one he put on was a man, then even if he was a man, he is now in no way a man. For the apostle says, “Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, we no longer know him so.” Because of him I am no longer a man, if I follow his words. For he says, “I said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.”

^{6b} So, just as he is “the firstborn from the dead,” in the same way he became the firstborn of all human beings, having changed into God. “Cursed, then, is the man who has his hope in man, and will make the flesh of his arm firm.” That means anyone who gives authority to fleshly things, who gains bodily strength and wages war according to the flesh. But the holy person is not like that. “He does not make the flesh of his arm firm,” for he “always carries about the putting to death of Jesus in his body,” and he puts to death “the members that are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness.” Having put these to death, “he does not make the flesh of his arm firm.” “Cursed is whoever has his hope in man.” This is also said against those who hope in high positions. “So-and-so is my friend, he is a centurion, he is a procurator. So-and-so is my friend, and he is rich and provides for me.” Then this saying

is spoken to such a person as well: “Cursed is the man who has his hope in man.” We hope in no man, even if they seem to be our friends. For we hope not in them but in our Lord, who is Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 16

^{1a} In the Gospel according to Matthew it is written that our Savior came to the Sea of Galilee and saw “Simon and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.” Then the account says that the Savior saw them and said, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” And they left their nets and followed him. Jesus made them take up fishing again, this time for people. He also found two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father, mending their nets. These he called to the same craft, and he made them fishers of men too. Consider those who have received from God the grace of speech. That speech is woven like nets and put together from the holy Scriptures like a casting-net, so that the woven mesh is thrown around the souls of the hearers. Consider also that this is done skillfully, according to the craft. Now our Savior sends out fishers of men, having trained them, so that we may be able to come up out of the sea and escape its bitter waves. But those lifeless fish, when they are brought up in the dragnets, the casting-nets, the nets or on the hooks, die a death that is not followed by life. The one who is caught by the fishers of Jesus and brought up out of the sea dies too. But he dies to the world and dies to sin. After he has died to the world and to sin, he is made alive by the Word of God and takes up another life. Suppose you could imagine, for the sake of argument, the soul of a fish changing after it leaves the body of the fish and becoming something better than a fish. I am only offering an illustration; let no one take occasion from it [as though he had not heard]. Think of something like this.

^{1b} You have come up out of the sea, having fallen into the nets of Jesus’ disciples. When you come out, your soul changes. You are no longer a fish spending your time in the salty waves of the sea. At once your soul changes and is transformed, and becomes something better and more divine than it was before. That it is transformed and changed, hear Paul saying: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord, the Spirit.” And this fish that was caught by the fishers of Jesus, once

transformed, leaves its former haunts in the sea and makes its home in the mountains. So it no longer needs fishers to bring it up from the sea, but a second kind of men, who are called hunters, who hunt “from every mountain and from every hill.” So you, having come up from the sea and been caught in the nets of Jesus’ disciples, change from the sea. Forget it. Come to the mountains, the prophets, and to the hills, the righteous, and make your dwelling there. Then afterward, when the time [of your hunting comes, you may be taken by the hunters, just as you were first taken by the fishers]. Who might these be but those appointed to receive the souls that are on the hills, the ones not lying down below? And see whether the prophet did not cry out these things in a mystery, setting forth this very meaning in the words: “Behold, I am sending many fishers, says the Lord, and they will fish them. And after this I will send many hunters, and they will hunt them on every mountain and on every hill.”

² So if you want to be caught by the hunters, take care not to make your dwelling in the hollows, and do not linger down below anywhere. Seek the mountains. Go up the mountain where Jesus was transfigured. Go up the mountain to which Jesus went up when he saw the crowds, and the disciples followed him, where “he opened his mouth and taught, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” and then the blessings that follow these. These hunters are not permitted to catch anyone from anywhere except from the mountains, the hills, and the holes of the rocks. For these three things are mentioned in the prophet: “For I will send many hunters, and they will hunt them on every mountain, on every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.” So where am I to find the meaning of the rocks, and of the holes in the rocks? I go to Exodus and look for a trace of an account of the holes of the rocks. There I find Moses wanting to know God, and God promising him and saying: “Look, I will put you in a hole of the rock, and you will see my back parts, but my face will not be seen by you.” If you understand the rock there, and see the hole in the rock, [and the one who looks sees God through the hole of the rock], you will also see the many rocks and their holes. Then who is that rock, the one rock? “The rock was Christ.” “For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them.” And in the thirty-ninth Psalm it is said: “He set my feet upon a rock.” What is the hole in the rock? If you look at the coming of Jesus, understanding him as a whole to be the rock, you will see the hole in connection with his coming.

Through that hole the things that come after God are seen. This is what is meant by “and you will see my back parts.”

³ But I have found one hole of one rock. Now I move in my discourse from the “hole” to the “cleft” of the rock, and I look for the many rocks as well. If I come to the company of the prophets, or of the apostles, or even of the holy angels who have gone up higher, I say that all the imitators of Christ become rocks, just as he is a rock. And just as he has a hole through which the back parts of God are perceived, in the same way each one, giving a way for God to be understood through the things he says, makes a hole in himself, or, if you prefer another name, a cleft. Through that hole or cleft you will see the law through Moses, his prophecy through Isaiah, and other words of God through Jeremiah. And if it is an angel who is speaking, as in the saying, “the angel who speaks in me,” then there too I stop at the angel. There also I see a rock and a hole of the rock, and I see God in an angelic way.

^{4a} But I need an example to show how one can come to an angel and see God through the angel. It is written in Exodus: “An angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire from a bush. And Moses sees that the bush is burning with fire, and the bush is not consumed.” The Scripture did not go on to say “the angel of the Lord,” as it said at the beginning, “an angel appeared.” Instead it says, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” So God was there, seen in the angel, just as God is known through the rock and through the opening in it. You do not know, then, when the hunters are sent. So never come down from the mountains. Do not leave the hills. Do not be outside the holes of the rocks. For if you are found outside, you will be spoken to as one who is outside and speaks the words of those outside: “Fool, this very night they are demanding your soul from you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” These words will be said to you if you say: “I will tear down my storehouses and build bigger ones, and I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years. Rest, eat, drink, be merry.” You see the man who is below the mountains, below the hills, outside the holes of the rocks. He goes astray even in his judgment about what is good, thinking that these things are good. That is why he says: “And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years.” He has supposed that grain and the abundance of earthly things are good. He did not see that the truly good

things are not in the cursed earth; the truly good things are in heaven. He stored up treasure on earth because he thought the things on earth were good. But if someone, obeying Jesus, changes from storing up treasure “on earth” to storing it up “in heaven,” it will not be said to him, “Fool, this very night they are demanding your soul from you.” Instead the hunters will come. They are not looking for the creatures down below, but for those in the mountains, those on the hills, those sheltered in the holes of the rocks. They will catch these and carry them away from that hunt.

4b To where? To the rest of the holy and blessed ones in Christ Jesus. For he says, “My eyes are on all their ways.” God has his eyes on such people, those who make their dwelling on the mountains, on the hills and in the holes of the rocks, and on all their ways. “And they were not hidden from my face”; that is true of such people, for it is the wicked who hide from the face of God. After the transgression, Adam heard “the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,” and he hid. But the holy person does not hide. He has a heart that is bold toward God, a boldness that comes from a holy way of life. For “if our conscience does not condemn us, we have boldness toward God, and whatever we ask we receive from him.” Now Adam, though he sinned, did not sin to an extreme and grievous degree. That is why he hid “from the face of God.” But what did Cain do, who was more sinful than Adam, and utterly impious, the killer of his brother? “He went out from the face of God.” So, comparing evils, hiding from the face of God is the lesser one. For Adam hides not because he has lost all shame, but because he is ashamed before God. “They were not hidden, then, from my face.” These people who did these things were once in sins, and they were fished out of the sins that are in the sea.

5a So that those who have been “fished” and afterward have come to the mountains do not suppose that all this happened to them because of their righteousness, the word reminds not only them but us also of our earlier sins. That is why, after the acts of kindness, it is said: “And their wrongdoings were not hidden from before my eyes.” What follows is going to cause us a struggle. If we understand it as consistent with what came before, we will take careful thought about the repayment of sins. If it seems not to be consistent with what was said earlier about people being fished and hunted, then it throws us into no ordinary struggle. For he says: “And I will repay first, double, their injustices and their sins, by which they defiled my land with

the corpses of their abominations, and by their lawless deeds with which they filled my inheritance.” Whether some people removed the word “first” from what was written because they did not understand it, or whether the Seventy arranged to remove it on purpose, God would know. But we compared the other editions and found it standing there: “And I will repay first, double, their injustices.” The point is to show this: even if they are worthy of blessedness because of their later works, they are still human beings and have fallen into sins, so they must first receive back their sins. And see whether this is not true. Who will not receive back his sins, except the one who, after believing and receiving forgiveness of sins (so that he hears Jesus saying, “Your sins are forgiven you”), sins no more? But suppose we sin after the forgiveness of sins and after the dispensation of the washing of rebirth. That is what the many of us do, who have not been made perfect as the apostles were. And suppose that after sinning, and even along with sinning, we do some things as we ought. What awaits us? That needs to be considered.

5b Then if we depart this life having sins, but also having good and courageous deeds, will we be saved on account of the good deeds, and be acquitted of the sins we committed knowingly? Or will we be punished for the sins, and nowhere receive a reward for the good deeds? But neither alternative is in accord with God’s justice. It is not just that we receive the worse things and not the better. It is also not just that we receive the better things and not the worse, since God wishes to cleanse and cut out wickedness. Suppose you have built, on the foundation, Christ Jesus, whom you have been taught, not only “gold and silver and precious stone” (if you have gold, much gold or a little; suppose you have silver and precious stone). But I do not say only these. Suppose you also have “wood and hay and straw.” What do you want to happen to you after your departure? Do you want to enter the holy places with your wood and your hay and your straw, and so defile the kingdom of God? Or, on the other hand, do you want to be left behind in the fire because of the hay, the wood and the straw, and receive nothing for the gold and silver and precious stone? That is not reasonable either.

6a What then? First it follows that he receives, on account of the wood, the fire that consumes the wood, the hay and the straw. For our God, in his essence, is said, by those who can understand, to be a consuming fire. The prophet kept silent about what it consumes when he said, “Our God is a consuming fire,” but he has left it to us to work out. Since he said, “God is a con-

suming fire,” there is something that is consumed. What then is consumed? It is not what is according to the image and likeness that he consumes. He does not consume his own creature. He consumes the hay that was built on, the wood that was built on, the straw that was built on. The passage was very hard to explain. There were promises, and after the promises he says: “And I will repay first, double, their injustices.” The word “first” is added of necessity. First the things of injustice, then the things of righteousness are paid back, for God does not repay in the opposite order. If he first paid back the good things, so that we might receive the good things, but now he pays back the evil things, then the good things would have to come to an end so that we could receive the evil things. But we will receive the evil things first, and after that the good things. In this way the punishment of those who suffered it reaches its end through the destruction of the evils, so that after that he may pay back the good things.

^{6b} This is why you will find God in the holy Scriptures saying first the things that seem harsher, and after that the better things. “I will kill and I will make alive; I will strike, and I will heal.” “He himself causes pain and restores again; he struck, and his hands healed.” After hearing this, the person who understands and is rightly disposed toward these words can say: “Lord, who will dwell in your tent? Or who will settle on your holy mountain? He who walks blameless and works righteousness, who speaks truth in his heart; who has not deceived with his tongue, and has done no evil to his neighbor, and has not taken up a reproach against those nearest him.” (But we reproach even those who repent and turn back, though the Scripture says, “Do not reproach a man who is turning away from sin.”) “He has not taken up a reproach against those nearest him; the one who does evil is despised in his sight, but those who fear the Lord we will receive [back], and our sins [with them].”

⁷ But one of you who are listening will say: “Explain the word ‘double’ as well. Suppose I do receive my sins back first, so that once I have received them, what the apostle said may then be fulfilled: ‘If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.’ Why then do I receive my sins back ‘double?’” We must answer that “the servant who knew the master’s will and did not act according to his will will be beaten”, and not with few stripes but with “many.” So it is fitting that those from the nations who sin should receive their sins back single, but that we

should receive our failings back double. For “if we sin willingly after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a jealous fire that is about to consume the adversaries.” What was prophesied concerned those who would be fished and hunted and would first receive their sins back double. After this the calling of the nations is prophesied more clearly. They are no longer being called but have been called. They are no longer ignorant of what to confess or what to give thanks for, but have already learned. For in the earlier passages we learned that they were called, fished, and hunted, and what they would suffer; in the later passages we learn what happens next. Let us see what the prophet says about us, who are now learning to pray, or rather who have already learned.

8 “Lord, my strength and my help and my refuge in the day of evils: to you nations will come from the end of the earth and will say, ‘Our fathers possessed false idols, and there is no profit in them.’” Did the nations come to God from the end of the earth, and did the nations say, “Our fathers possessed false idols, and there is no profit in them”? How is it “from the end of the earth”? Some people on earth are first and some are last. Who are the first? “The wise of the world” are the first of the earth, and not simply first: “the wise of the world, the well-born,” the rich, those of rank. Who are the last? “God chose the foolish things of the world, the lowborn, the despised, the things that are not.” So “nations will come from the end of the earth” is as if he said: from the least of the people on earth, from the foolish, from the lowborn, from the despised. “And they will say: ‘Our fathers possessed false idols, and there is no profit in them.’” He does not mean that some idols are true, so that these are called false by contrast. He means idols that are false by their very nature: “and there is no profit in them.”

9 “If a man makes gods for himself.” People make gods for themselves not only out of statues. You will find people making gods for themselves out of their own inventions as well. Anyone who can invent another god, or another account of the making of the world different from the one the Spirit has written down, an arrangement of the world different from the true world [concerning the arrangement of the world], has made gods for himself and bowed down to the works of his hands. Think, for example, of those among the Greeks who first produced the teachings of this philosophy or that one, or, among the heresies, of those who first produced their doctrines.

These people made idols for themselves, inventions of the soul, and they turned and bowed down to the works of their own hands, welcoming their own inventions as truth. So the Word refutes everyone who makes gods for himself, whether by the senses or by the mind, and says: "If a man makes gods for himself, are they not gods? Therefore I will show them my hand at this time, and I will make known to them my power." What time is this, if not the time of the Lord's coming? He shows us the time. "And they will know," he says, "that my name is Lord."

^{10a} Then there is another prophecy, which, I do not know why, we did not find in the Septuagint. We did find it in the other editions, so it was clearly in the Hebrew. It is full of very necessary matters, able to turn our soul back if we pay attention. The words are these: "The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen, engraved with a diamond point on the tablet of their heart." One could take the easier course and say: this was written about the Jews, that their sin "is written." But if you see, as we have often shown, that Christ is spoken of figuratively as Judah, then perhaps "the sin of Judah" is the sin of us who believe in Christ, who came from the tribe of Judah. And if you can hear it in a still more hidden sense, perhaps the prophecy is about Judas who betrayed him, so that the prophecy says of him: "The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen, engraved with a diamond point on the breast of the heart." But again, the word "their" does not fit in his case. Perhaps, then, the prophet was speaking about us, saying that if we become sinners, these prophecies reach us. We have sinned, and our sin is not written outside us but in our heart, and it is written "with an iron pen, with a diamond point." The very fact will show that the sins we commit are engraved on us by our sinning. I was not conscious of this deed or this sin in myself.

^{10b} Once I have done it, I have an imprint of it, and the imprint of my sin, committed in my soul, is, as it were, written there. If my sin had been written in ink, I could have wiped it out. But now it is written "with an iron pen," written "with a diamond point," written "on the breast of the heart" of us all. So when I come to the place of instruction, the saying of the prophecy is fulfilled: "Nothing is hidden that will not be made known, and nothing is covered that will not be uncovered." My breast is laid bare, and my heart, with the letters of sin engraved on it, "by the pen" on my breast, and the imprints of my sins in my heart. "For nothing is hidden that will not be made known," but also "among one another the thoughts accusing or even

defending,” and “Do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the hearts.” To whom will he reveal them? Not to himself, for he knows “all things before they come to be.” But to whom, then, will he reveal them? To all who are going to see, because of their own purity, the sin of the one who has sinned, so that sinners may “rise to reproach and to everlasting shame.” May the God of all deliver us from these things, that we may rise to the glory that is in Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 17

¹ We have come to a much-discussed question: who is the partridge, of which Scripture now says, “The partridge called out, it gathered what it did not bring to birth, making its wealth without justice. In the middle of his days they will abandon him, and at his end he will be a fool”? We must take from the writings on the nature of animals what is recorded about the partridge. Then, knowing the facts about the creature, we can tell whether the partridge named here should be put in a better class or a worse one. It is said to be a very malicious, deceitful and crafty creature. It wants to trick those who hunt it, and often rolls about at the hunter’s feet, so that it seems to be close at hand and draws him away from the nest. When it judges that it has drawn the hunter off and that the chicks have escaped, then it flies away too. The creature is also so unclean that the males fight one another over mating, and a male mounts a male. So if this creature is malicious, unclean, crafty and deceitful, it is clear that to place it in a better class and apply it to the Savior would be impious. If we want to interpret it of the Adversary, we must see whether the whole interpretation follows from that.

² Let us begin, then, with “The partridge called out, it gathered what it did not bring to birth.” The devil, then, does not gather his own creatures, nor what he has begotten. When he calls out, he gathers the creatures of another and makes them his own. The partridge called out through Valentinus, through Marcion, through Basilides, through all the teachers of other doctrines. For none of them could speak the voice of Jesus: “My sheep will hear my voice.” The voice of Jesus is in Paul and Peter. That is why Paul said, “Do you seek proof of Christ speaking in me?” But the voice of the partridge, which gathered what it did not bring to birth, is in those who lead astray and deceive, preying on the simplicity and unpreparedness of the more plain-

mindful believers. So “the partridge called out, it gathered what it did not bring to birth, making its wealth without justice.” The partridge has grown rich. See how many tens of thousands it has. Many have become the partridge’s, that is, of the opposing power. And it made its wealth without caring about justice or having any judgment, acting without discrimination. That is why it says the partridge is “making its wealth without justice.” But my Savior makes his wealth with judgment, and his wealth is sifted and chosen out.

3 “In the middle of his days they will abandon him.” This means all of us who were once under the partridge that called out. For it called out not only through those already mentioned but through absolutely all who deceive, and who invite people to godlessness as though it were piety, toward teachings contrary to the truth. But “in the middle of his days” we have abandoned him. All his days are the days of this age. But since Christ Jesus has rescued “us from the present evil age,” therefore “in the middle of his days” we have abandoned him. “And at his end he will be a fool.” For when was he ever wise, that at his end he should become a fool? But we will say that he was wise. For “the serpent was the wisest of all the wild animals on the earth which the Lord God made.” He was wise, in line with what is said in Isaiah: “I will bring upon the mind, the great one, the ruler of the Assyrians. For he said: I will act by my strength, and by my wisdom

4a ...you may receive: “If anyone among you seems to himself to be wise in this age, let him become foolish.” He who cried out before resolves it: “Be foolish and silly, so that you may become wise.” So if there is a kind of wisdom that deserves blame, the kind by which “the children of this age are wiser than the children of light in their generation,” then God is good. He overturns varied things by their opposites, so that what was said is fulfilled: “his last end will be foolish.” When will his last end be foolish? Christ must “reign until God puts all his enemies under his feet.” When God has made everything subject to him, “the last enemy to be destroyed is death.” When death has been destroyed, then the partridge’s last days will have come, and his end will have become foolish. That is enough about the partridge. 4. The beginning of the second chapter was also read: “A throne of glory, exalted from the beginning, the place of our sanctification, our support, the endurance of Israel. Lord, let all who have forsaken you be put to shame; let those who depart be written on the earth, because they have forsaken the fountain

of life, the Lord.” The blessed prophet Isaiah, seeing the Lord and his kingdom, said: “I saw the Lord of Hosts sitting on a high and lofty throne.” Jeremiah also saw how God reigns, and so, glorifying him, he says: “A throne of glory, exalted from the beginning, the place of our sanctification.”

^{4b} If you want to understand these words of Christ, you will not sin. If you understand them of the Father, you will not think impiously. For the Savior is [also] a throne of glory, high and from the beginning. He is “a throne of glory,” and that is why his kingdom is exalted. And “our sanctification” is Christ: “For both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one.” “The endurance of Israel”: just as the Savior is righteousness itself, truth itself, sanctification itself, so he is endurance itself. It is not possible to be righteous without Christ, or holy without him, or to endure without having Christ. For he himself is the endurance of Israel. Even if you refer the words to God, you will not be impious in doing so. “Lord, let all who have forsaken you be put to shame, those who have departed.” Each of us, when we sin, forsakes Christ through the very things by which we sin, and by forsaking Christ we forsake God. For in doing wrong he forsakes righteousness. In becoming profane he forsakes sanctification. In making war he forsakes peace. In coming under the enemy he forsakes redemption. And in being outside the wisdom of God he forsakes wisdom. So the prophet pronounces a curse on all who forsake God, teaching us what will happen to them, when he says: “Let all who forsake you be put to shame.” The further they have departed, the more let them be put to shame. “Let them be written on the earth.” All people are written down: the holy in heaven, and sinners on the earth. It is to the disciples that [the Savior] says, “Rejoice that your names are written in the heavens.” So we ought to rejoice if someone becomes the kind of person whose name is written in the heavens.

^{4c} As the names of the saints are written in heaven, so the names of those who live in an earthly way are written on the earth. These people do not pass through the land of Edom. They hold the fields of the land of Edom and its vineyards, and they are written on the earth as people who have abandoned God. For he says, “Let those who have turned away be put to shame; let them be written on the earth.” And indeed, “with the measure you measure, it will be measured to you.” Each person is himself the cause of being written there. If you seek what is on earth, you are not seeking heavenly things. If your soul has leaned toward the things of this world, you are the cause of it yourself,

since Jesus says, “Do not store up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves dig through and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” Are you storing up treasure in heaven? Then you are yourself the cause of your name being written in heaven. All this is on account of the words “let them be written on the earth.” And the prophet gives the reason: “because they abandoned the Lord, the fountain of life.” At the beginning the same prophet spoke in the person of God: “They abandoned me, the fountain of the water of life.” And now: “They abandoned the Lord, the fountain of life.” So let us also speak, if we do not want to abandon the Lord, the fountain of life. Let us use the voice of Jesus’ genuine disciples, which they spoke to the teacher when he said to them, “Do you also want to go away?” What then shall we say? “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” Here the second passage came to an end.

^{5a} Then there is another prayer, which goes like this: “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my boast. Look, they say to me, ‘Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come.’ But I did not grow weary following after you, and I did not desire the day of man; you know.” Only to the one who came for those who are sick, the physician who says, “Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are sick,” can everyone who wants to be cured of the sickness of his soul say with confidence, “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed.” But if someone else besides him promises the medicine of souls, you could not truthfully say to that one, “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed.” For that woman with the “flow of blood” spent “all that she had” on physicians, and “could not be healed by any of them.” It would not have been reasonable to say to any of them, “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed.” She could say it only to him, for whom it is enough to touch “the fringe of the garment.” So I say to him, “Heal me, Lord, and I shall be healed.” For if you heal, the end will follow upon your healing: the cure, so that I am saved.

^{5b} As for all the others who will try to save me, I shall not be saved. The only true salvation is if Christ saves, because then I shall be saved. “The horse is a false hope for salvation”: so everything else apart from God is a false hope for salvation. For this reason I would say to him, “Save me, Lord, and I shall be saved.” And I say this if I am also able to say the next words, having renounced every other boast, so that I may say, “for you are my boast,” or when I fulfil the commandment that says, “Let not the wise man boast in his

wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches; but let the one who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows that I am the Lord.” Blessed, then, is the one who has renounced every boasting here below, such as in so-called noble birth, in beauty and bodily things, in wealth, in reputation, and who is content with one boast, so that he can say, “for you are my boast.”

6 “See, they say to me: ‘Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come.’ But I did not grow weary following after you.” Jesus says to you, “Take up your cross and follow me,” and “Leave everything and follow me,” and “Whoever does not leave father and mother and follow after me is not worthy to be my disciple.” So if you become the kind of person who always follows Jesus, you will follow, and as long as you follow you will not grow weary. For “there will be no toil in Jacob, and no labor will be seen in Israel.” There is no weariness for the one who follows Jesus; the following itself takes the weariness away. For this reason he himself says, so that we may no longer be weary, since we were weary before we began to follow him: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” So if we come to him weary and follow him, we will say, “I did not grow weary following after you.” It follows from this that we should also say, “I did not desire the day of a man.” There is a day of a man, and there is a day of God. Let each of us long for the day of the resurrection of the saints, not for the day of which it is written: “Woe to those who desire the day of the Lord; and it is darkness and not light.” Who is the one who says, “And I did not desire the day of a man”? The plain sense of the saying will convict us, because we [did] desire the day of a man. Often when we have fallen ill and seem to be facing death, as we are about to depart, we plead with the brothers who visit us and say: “Ask for my recovery; ask that I may remain in this life.” In saying this we are not longing for the holy day of God, but for the day of a man. So let us put away this love of life and this longing for a human day, and let us seek to see that day on which we will obtain the blessedness that is in Christ Jesus, to whom belong glory and power forever. Amen.

HOMILY 18

1a There are two visions in a row that have been read from Jeremiah. The first concerns the clay vessel in the potter’s hand, which, after it is broken, can be put right, for it can be reshaped. The second vision concerns the earthenware jar, which, once it has been smashed, cannot be mended. When

it was clay, if it was broken, even if it had already been shaped, then because it was clay it could become dough again a second time and be made a second time. But when, after being clay, it has become fired earthenware and has been hardened by the fire, then after the earthenware is broken it cannot be mended. What this means, let us first consider in general terms, and then, if God grants it, we will examine it word by word. As long as we are in this life, we are being shaped, if I may put it this way, like clay vessels by a potter, and we are shaped either toward evil or toward virtue. But we are shaped in such a way that our wickedness can be broken, so that a new and better creation may come about, and so that our progress, after it has been given form, can be dissolved back into a clay vessel.

^{1b} But when we have passed beyond the present age and come to the end of life, and are then set on fire, either by the fire of the burning arrows of the evil one, whatever we then become, or by the divine fire (for indeed “our God is a consuming fire”), if, I say, we become whatever we become under this fire or that, and if we are broken, whether we are broken and lost after having been good vessels or after having been worthless vessels, we are not made anew, and our make-up admits no improvement. For this reason, as long as we are here, as if in the potter’s hand, even if the vessel slips from his hands, it can be healed and made anew. This much has been said somewhat in a preliminary way, before we examine the rest in the discourse: let it be said of the two kinds of vessels, the clay one which has not yet been hardened into earthenware, and the second one, which has already become earthenware.

^{2a} Let us now look at the words themselves, and at what is said about the clay vessel in the potter’s hand. Let us see how the word in the prophet, the Lord who prophesies in him, gives us other and not small openings for interpreting what happens with the thing formed in the potter’s hand. “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: Rise and go down to the house of the potter.” Jeremiah is above; he has gone up beyond the clay vessels. The clay vessels are below, and the nature that governs the clay vessels, coming down together with those it governs, is below. For this reason the word spoken to Jeremiah from the Lord says to him: “Rise and go down to the house of the potter, and there you will hear my words.” To Moses it is said, “Go up the mountain and hear.” To Jeremiah it is said, “Go down to the house of the potter and hear.” For each one who hears a word is either taught

about things higher up or learns about things lower down. If I am being taught about the lower things, I go down in the word, so that I may see the lower things. If I am learning about the higher things, I go up in the word to the higher things, so that I may behold what is there. So that all of you may follow what is said as well as you can, I will use examples from Scripture too, and along with the example I will bring out clearly the interpretation I have given. “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

2b There is a certain wisdom concerning each of these: wisdom about the heavenly things, how the heavenly things are arranged; wisdom about the things under the earth, since there is also a wisdom of God about the ordering of the things under the earth; and likewise about the things on earth. If I am going to take in the wisdom about the heavenly things, I go up to the heavens, as Moses went up to the top of the mountain, so that the voice from heaven might be heard by him, as it is written. For he was about to be taught heavenly forms of worship. There is a shadow and a pattern of heavenly mysteries in the written laws of worship, as the apostle taught when he said: “They serve a pattern and shadow of the heavenly things.” So just as I go up when I am about to be taught about the heavenly things, in the same way, if I need to learn about the things under the earth, even if I have become a prophet, I go down. And perhaps for this reason Samuel, when he was taught the things under the earth, went down below and came to be in Hades. He was not condemned to be in Hades, but became a scout and an observer of the mysteries under the earth. The things the apostle says about wisdom may be of this kind too, distinguished by the knowing of “what is the breadth and length and depth and height.” If you are going to know the height, you go up in the word to the height. If you are going to know what lies between the height and the depth, you know the breadth and the length. The mind that is able to follow the Son of God, led by the word that teaches about everything, reaches everywhere. And it follows him by renouncing the world and taking up the cross. For the one who can follow Jesus is the one who can say: “The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

2c This saying needs some comfort and explanation: “Go down to the potter’s house, and there you will hear my words.” It has to be compared with the saying, “Go up, and you will hear my words.” Some of those who

hear go up in order to be taught, though they do not necessarily go up in the body. Others go down while their soul stays on high, in order to see the Word who is highest speaking about the lowest things. My Lord Jesus Christ himself has gone up and has come down: "The one who went up is the same one who came down, far above all the heavens." So if you too intend to understand the one who went up to the highest place, the Word who speaks about the highest things, and to grasp the one who came down to the lowest places, who teaches about the lowest things, then "do not say, Who will go up into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down), "or, Who will go down into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). "But what does the Scripture say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." Through this word you go up into heaven. The word is near you concerning the ascent, and the word is near you concerning the lowest things. What else could this be but the Word, whom the holy person can have within himself everywhere? For "the kingdom of heaven is within you."

³ So the prophet goes down to the potter's house and tells what he saw. He says: "And behold, he was doing work with his hands, and the vessel that he was making in the clay fell apart in his hands. And he made it again into another vessel, as it pleased him to make it." But I do not know what the prophet saw when he was at the potter's. He saw the potter working. The vessel being made was of clay. The vessel fell apart. Why exactly did he not say, "He let the vessel go from his hand," or lay the blame on the potter? It is because the passage is about living vessels, which fall apart through their own doing. That is why it says, "The vessel fell apart from his hands." So pay attention to yourself as well. You are in the hands of the potter and are still being shaped. Take care that you do not, through your own fault, fall out of his hands. No one snatches anyone "out of his hands," as it is said in the Gospel according to John. But it is not written that, just as no one snatches, so no one falls out of his hands. For free will is free. And I say: no one will snatch anyone from the hand of the shepherd, and no one can take us from the hand of God. But we ourselves, if we are careless, can fall out of his hands.

⁴ "And the word of the Lord came to me: Shall I not be able to do with you, house of Israel, as this potter does? says the Lord." Each person understands what is written according to his ability. One takes its meaning more on the surface, as if drawing from a spring on level ground. Another goes deeper, as if drawing up water from a well. Both can be helped, since the

same thing is a spring to one and a well to the other. The Gospel bears witness to this when it tells the story of the Samaritan woman. There the same thing is called both “spring” and “well,” sometimes one and sometimes the other. Let anyone who is able consider this closely, so as to see that what is the same in substance is a spring to the shallower view and a well to the deeper. This is my introduction to the explanation that is coming, concerning the clay vessel that fell from the potter’s hand and was shaped again. Some have looked at this more simply and understood it that way. I will set before you their account and explanation. After that, if we have something deeper, we will explain that too. They say that what is shown here may be the resurrection. If the clay vessel fell from the potter’s hands and he makes “another vessel” from the same material, the same clay, “as it pleased him,” then God, the potter of our bodies and the craftsman who built us, can do the same. When this body falls apart and is broken for whatever reason, he can take it up again, renew it, and make it more beautiful and better, “another vessel, as it pleased him to make.” Let this explanation also have its due.

^{5a} Let us listen to the Lord himself as he explains and says: “Shall I not be able to do with you, house of Israel, as this potter does?” says the Lord. Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hands. At one moment I will speak against a nation and a kingdom, to uproot them and destroy them; and that nation will turn back from the evils about which I spoke to it, and I will change my mind about the evils I had planned to do to them. And at another moment I will speak concerning a nation and a kingdom, that it be built up and planted; and they will do evil in my sight and not listen to my voice, and I will change my mind about the good things I said I would do for them, says the Lord.” We see that this passage about the potter’s house does not refer to any individual, but to two nations. For at the start he says he is going to speak about nations, to hint something to those who are able to hear unspeakable mysteries: “At one moment I will speak against a nation.” Look for the “moment” and for the first nation, against whom he speaks of destruction because of their sins. Yet even after speaking of destruction because of their sins, he still promises that if they repent, he will change his mind about the evils he said he would do to them. Then again he speaks about a second nation, that a whole nation be “built up and planted.” And since this nation, which is being built up and planted, has a good promise but is able to sin, he says, after saying these things, that if they fall away from

good works, “I will change my mind about the good things I said I would do for them.” Who, then, are the two nations: the first one named, against which the word utters a threat, and the second, to which a promise is made? He threatens in such a way that, if they repent, he will not carry out the threat. He promises in such a way that, if the second nation falls away and proves unworthy of the promises, it will not obtain them.

^{5b} The whole plan of God for the people of the world is set out above all with regard to two nations. The first nation was Israel; the second, since the coming of Christ, is this nation of ours. To the first, God made the threats he made, and we see what became of the threats against the first nation. They have been taken into captivity; their city was razed; the holy place was torn down; the altar was thrown down; nothing of their ancient sacred things is still preserved among them. For God said to that nation: Repent; and they did not repent. After this had been said to them, God speaks to this second nation about its being built up. But he sees that this nation too consists of human beings who can fall away again. For this reason he threatens this nation also, and says: Even though I have spoken beforehand about the building, the planting, and the cultivation, this nation too is going to sin; and if it sins, the same things that were said to those others because of their sins will happen to it, and they will suffer them unless they repent. Search the whole Scripture, and you will find that most of what is said concerns these two nations. God chose the fathers and gave them a promise. He brought out of Egypt a people from the fathers’ stock. He was patient with them when they sinned. He trained them as a father does. He brought them in and gave them the land of promise. He sent them prophets at the proper times; he disciplined them and turned them back from their sins. He was patient, always sending those who would heal them, until the chief physician came: the prophet who surpasses prophets, the physician who surpasses physicians. When he came, they betrayed and killed him, saying, “Away with him, away with him from the earth! Crucify him, crucify him!” Immediately visitation came upon the nation. The place where my Jesus was crucified was made desolate, and God chose another nation. See how great the harvest is, even if the workers are few.

^{5c} God also arranges things in another way. The net is always being cast into the sea of this life, and fish of every kind are gathered. He sends out “the many fishermen.” He sends out “the many hunters,” and they hunt on

“every mountain” and on “every hill.” See how great a plan there is for the salvation of the nations. “See then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward” the first nation, which fell; but toward you, the second nation, promises and “kindness, if you continue in the kindness; for you also will be cut off.” For the axe did not lie at the root of the trees only at that time. The axe is ready to come again. “The axe lies at the root of the trees” — that is what my Jesus said then, prophesying about Israel, among whom the axe was present. He himself was the axe for the unfruitful tree, and he said, “Already the axe lies at the root of the trees.” All the trees there that bore no fruit were cut down, thrown into the fire, and punished. But now another field has come into being, corresponding to the first, of which it was said: “Bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance, in your prepared dwelling place.” God has brought his nation in to the mountain of his inheritance. As for the mountain, I do not look for it as the Jews do, among lifeless woods. The mountain is Christ. In him we were planted; on him we have been kept safe. So take care. Even if God is patient, the master of the house may come and say, “For three years now I have been coming to this fig tree, and it has borne no fruit. Cut it down. Why should it also use up the ground?” For the one who comes to the gathering and bears no fruit is using up good ground, Christ, the mystery of the church.

^{6a} “At the end I will speak concerning a nation or a kingdom.” The word “end” might seem to be used casually. But it is said with a particular meaning. In the phrase “I will speak concerning a nation or a kingdom,” the “end” is of this kind: to the first nation the “end” is spoken as “I will tear down,” and to the second nation, “I will build you up.” Again, “I will up-root” is said to the first, and “I will plant” to the second. Now, since the “end” has been spoken, must the end therefore happen? According to Scripture, God, who does not change his mind, is said to change his mind. Let us pay attention to the wording, so that, if we are able to give an answer about how these things are said, we may accept the passage. “At the end I will speak,” he says, “concerning a nation or a kingdom, to remove them and destroy them; and if that nation turns from the evils that I spoke against it, I will also change my mind about the evils that I planned to do to them. And at the end I will speak concerning a nation or a kingdom, to build it up and plant it; and they will do evil in my sight so as not to hear my voice, and I will change my mind about the good things that I spoke of doing to them.”

We are required to give an answer about God's change of mind. For changing one's mind seems to be a fault, and unworthy not only of God but even of a wise man. I cannot imagine a wise man changing his mind. As the word is commonly used, the one who changes his mind does so because he has not planned well. But God, who foreknows what is to come, cannot have planned badly and therefore change his mind. How then does Scripture bring him in saying "I will change my mind"? And I am not yet saying that in the books of Kingdoms it is written, "I regret that I anointed Saul as king," and that it is said of him in general, "and changing his mind about evils." But see what we are taught about God in general.

^{6b} Take note of what we are taught about God in general. In one place we read, "God is not like a man, to be threatened, nor like a son of man, to be warned." From that saying we learn that God is not like a man. But another passage teaches that God is like a man. It says, "The Lord your God disciplined you, as a man might discipline his son," and again, "he bore with his ways as a man bears with his son." So when the Scriptures speak of God as he is in himself, and do not mix his dealings with human affairs, they say he is not like a man. "Of his greatness there will be no end," and "he is to be feared above all gods," and "Praise him, all you angels of God; praise him, all his powers; praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars and light." If you gather up the sacred writings, you would find countless other passages to which you can apply "God is not like a man." But when the divine ordering of things is woven into human affairs, it takes on a human mind, manner and language. Think of how we speak to a two-year-old child: we lisp for the child's sake. If we kept up the dignity of grown men and spoke to children without coming down to their way of talking, the children could not understand. Think of God in the same way when he deals with the human race, and especially with those who are still infants. Notice how we who are grown men change our words for babies. We give bread a special name for them, and we call drinking by another word. We do not use the speech we use with grown people our own age, but some other childish, baby-like word. And if we name their clothes for the children, we give those a different name too, as though inventing a child's name.

^{6c} Are we then imperfect at such times? And if someone overheard us talking with children, would he say, "This old man has become a fool; this man has forgotten his beard and his grown age"? Or is it allowed, in accom-

modating ourselves to a child, not to speak the language of an elder or of a fully grown person, but a child's language? God also speaks to children. The Savior says, "Behold, I and the children whom God gave me." It could be said to the old man who speaks to the child like a child (or, to put it more strongly, like a baby): "You have borne your son's ways; you have put on the baby's manner and taken up his condition." Understand the Scripture in the same way when it says, "The Lord your God bore your ways, as a man might bear the ways of his son." Those who translated from the Hebrew seem not to have found this word in use among the Greeks. As in many other cases, they fashioned it themselves and made up "he bore your ways" (that is, he put on your ways), "as a man might bear his son's ways" (following the example I have given). So since we repent, when God speaks to us while we are repenting, he says, "I repent." And when he threatens us, he does not pretend to be one who foreknows, but threatens as one speaking to babies. He does not make a show of having known "all things before they came to be." Rather, if I may put it this way, he plays the part of the baby and pretends not even to know what is going to happen. So he threatens a nation for its sins and says, "If the nation repents, I also will repent." O God, when you threatened, did you not know whether the nation would repent or not? And what of when you made your promise? Did you not know whether the man, or the nation to whom the word was spoken, would stay worthy of the promises or not?

^{6d} But he does not pretend to know. You could find many such human-sounding expressions in Scripture, such as: "Speak to the sons of Israel; perhaps they will listen and repent." God did not say "perhaps they will listen" as though he were in doubt. God does not doubt, so that he should say "perhaps they will listen and repent." He says it to show you at length your own free will, so that you will not say: "If he foreknew that I would be lost, I must be lost; if he foreknew that I would be saved, I must by all means be saved." So he does not pretend to know what is going to happen with you, in order to preserve your free will by not having settled beforehand, or foreknown, whether you will repent or not. And he says to the prophet, "Speak, perhaps they will repent." You will find countless other things like this said about God bearing the ways of man. If you hear of God's wrath and his anger, do not suppose that wrath and anger are passions in God. They are arrangements of the use of words, meant to turn the infant around and make him

better. We too put on a fearsome face for children, not out of our real disposition but as a matter of management. If we kept the gentleness of our soul toward the infant in our face, and showed him the tender affection we have for him, without turning ourselves aside or, so to speak, changing ourselves for the sake of his turning around, we would ruin him and make him worse. So in the same way God is said to be angry, and he says he is furious, so that you may turn and be made better. And truly he is neither angry nor furious; but you will experience what belongs to anger and fury, when, because of your wickedness, you fall into hardships that are hard to bear, whenever he disciplines you with what is called the wrath of God.

⁷ Next, after the account of the two nations, the first to which the threat is given and the second to which the promise is given, he says (evidently speaking to the first group): “And now speak to the men of Judah and to those living in Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am shaping evils against you.” Because these things that I am shaping against you are in my hand, they can fall through. Make them fall from my hand, so that I may change the evils I am shaping against you and make them good. You would not find it said: “Look, I am shaping good things against you,” with the corresponding things following, so as then to show that he lets the good things he is shaping fall from his hands in order to make them evil. No, he shapes evils according to the example already given, and in shaping evils he is managing things. (Leaving aside the interpretation already given for “it fell from my hands.”) The point is that if it falls, I do not know what the end of the evils being shaped will turn out to be.

^{8a} “Let each one turn back from his evil way, and make your practices better.” Sometimes the simpler folk say: “Blessed are the people of old, because they heard the Lord speaking through the prophet”: “And the Lord spoke to them.” But the Lord also says to us now, through what is written, “Let each one turn back from his evil way.” The Lord himself speaks with you, saying: “And make your practices better.” But those to whom the words of exhortation about repentance were spoken gave an answer. Let us see what they answered, so that we do not give such answers ourselves. What do they say in reply? “We will be brave, for we will go after our own turnings away, and each of us will do what is pleasing to his evil heart.” Even if you do not say it in words, if your life is such that you sin, then by your wicked actions after the words of exhortation you are saying the same thing in effect: “We

will be brave, for we will go after our own turnings away, and each of us will do what is pleasing to his evil heart.” What is “we will go after our turnings away”? There are those who began to put [their hand to the plough] and to [take hold of] the good, and then turned away from it into worthless things. So whenever someone puts [his hand to the plough] and turns back, he will go “after his turnings away.” For he will go after those things he turned away from, and runs back to those sins which he had abandoned.

^{8b} So consider those who hear these words. Some are catechumens who have left the Gentile way of life. Others are believers who have already made progress in “stretching forward to what lies ahead.” If their life has become wicked, they are saying nothing other than this: “We will go after our turnings back, and each of us will do what pleases his heart.” And note that it is not just any heart, but “his evil heart.” For there is an evil heart, and there is a good heart. So let no one go “after his turnings back,” and let no one do “what pleases his evil heart.” “Therefore,” the Lord says to those who answer this way, “ask among the nations: who has heard such dreadful things as the virgin Israel has done, and done to excess?” This too may seem to have been said without any deeper meaning. But consider the church that comes from the nations. [The text here is corrupt; the sense seems to be that it is addressed among the nations, and that it will be said:] “Ask among the nations; hear what dreadful things the virgin Israel has done, and done to excess.” Let us compare the life of those who sinned with the life of those who turned and believed, and we will see the difference. Those people did dreadful things, for they killed “the Lord of glory.” These others, though those people did dreadful things, turned to him, who was put to death and died at their hands for the sins of the world. So “ask among the nations: who has heard such dreadful things as the virgin Israel has done, and done to excess?”

^{9a} “Will breasts fail from the rock, or snow from Lebanon? Or will water carried violently by the wind turn aside? For my people have forgotten me. They burned incense to emptiness, and they will grow weak in their ways, [on] everlasting [lines/ropes], so as to walk on paths that have no road for a journey, so as to hand their land over to desolation and to everlasting hissing.” Here he has spoken of different kinds of water. The first is in the words “Will breasts fail from the rock?” The second is in the words “or snow from Lebanon?” The third is in the words “Will water carried violently by the wind turn aside?” These three kinds of water are the springs of water for

which the soul of the righteous longs, as it is likened to the deer. So each one may say: "As the deer longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, O God." Who, then, has become like the deer, an enemy of the race of snakes, and untouched by their venom, as the story is told of the deer? Who has thirsted for God so much that he can say, "My soul has thirsted for the living God"? Who has so thirsted for the breasts of the rock? "And the rock was Christ." Who has so thirsted for the Holy Spirit that he can say, "As the deer longs for the springs of water, so my soul longs for you, O God"? If we do not thirst for the three springs of water, we will not find even one spring of water. The Jews seemed to thirst for one spring of water, God. But because they did not thirst for Christ and the Holy Spirit, they have nothing to drink even from God. Those from the heresies seemed to thirst for Christ Jesus. But because they did not thirst for the Father, who is the God of the law and the prophets, for that reason they do not drink even from Jesus Christ.

9b Others hold to one God but despise the prophecies. They have not thirsted for the Holy Spirit who is in the prophets. For that reason they will not drink from the Father's spring either, or from the one who cried out in the temple and said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." So the "breasts" do not "fail from the rock." It is those people who "forsook the spring of living water." The spring of living water did not forsake them. God puts himself far from no one. Rather, "those who put themselves far from him will perish." God draws near to some, and he meets the one who comes to him. When the son who had eaten up his property came back, his father met him. And God promises through the prophets, "I will be nearer to them than the tunic is to their skin." For he says, "I am a God who draws near, and not a God far off, says the Lord." So the "breasts" will not "fail from the rock." These are the waters of Jesus. Nor will "the snow from Lebanon" fail. These are the waters of the Father. For "frankincense" (*libanos*) is the sacred incense according to the law of God, and it is offered on the altar, "pure frankincense, in equal measure." The mountain has the same name as this frankincense, and snow comes down from Lebanon, just as the water of the Holy Spirit does. About that water it is said, "Will water carried violently by the wind turn aside?" For it is indeed carried by the wind. The water of the Holy Spirit does not "turn aside" and does not flee. Rather, each of us, when we sin, becomes a runaway from drinking of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ “For my people have forgotten me; they have burned incense in vain.” Everyone who sins has forgotten God. But the righteous man says, “All this has come upon us, and we have not forgotten you, nor have we acted unjustly,” and he has not burned incense in vain. We must understand what “they burned incense in vain” means. If we take up again what was said earlier on the hundred and fortieth Psalm, we will see what “they burned incense in vain” is. In that Psalm something like this was said: “Let my prayer be set before you like incense.” So my prayer is a compound [made of:] . . . a fine and delicate heart. When our heart is not made thick and heavy, the prayer sent up becomes like incense before God. If then the prayer of the righteous man is incense before God, the prayer of the unrighteous man is also incense, but incense of such a kind that it can be said of it and of the unrighteous man praying, “They burned incense in vain.” It is like what is written about Judas: “Let his prayer become sin.” In praying, he burned incense in vain. Let us understand still more who it is that burns incense in vain. “Three times a year,” it says, “every male of yours shall appear before the Lord your God.” Right after this it adds, “You shall not appear before me empty.” So of those who come, [the text breaks off here; the Greek that follows is lost.]

HOMILY 19

¹⁰ . . . [the beginning is lost] . . . of the meaning of Scripture, which comes upon an eye able to take in the clarity of the sacred writings. I have said these things by way of introduction, to stir up and rouse both myself and those who are listening to pay attention to what has been read. Let us ask that Jesus come and appear to us, and that he teach us now what is written here.

^{11a} “Jeremiah prophesied. And Pashhur son of Immer, the priest, heard the words of the prophecy.” Many others, we may suppose, heard Jeremiah, at least as far as the plain sequence of the prophecy goes, yet no one else is recorded as having heard him so readily except Pashhur. The Scripture took care to say whose son he was: Immer’s. It also says that he held the office of priest, and what rank he had among the people: he was appointed chief officer of the house of the Lord at the time when Jeremiah was prophesying these words. It is recorded that when Pashhur heard the words of this prophecy, he struck Jeremiah. Nor was he content with striking him; he also threw him into a kind of pit [or: stocks, cistern, a “cataract”]. The Scripture took care to say where this pit was: at the Gate of Benjamin. It was in a place where there

was an upper room, and an upper room belonging to nothing other than the house of the Lord. The Holy Spirit recorded that these things happened to Jeremiah because of his prophecy, and that they were done by Pashhur. Then it says: on the next day Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the pit. And Jeremiah, once brought out, said to Pashhur: the Lord did not give you the name Pashhur. Another name has been set on you. As Jacob was given Israel, as Abram was given Abraham, as Sarah was given Sarra, so he has given you the name Exile [or: Sojourner]. And the reason he has called you Exile is that the Lord says: “See, I am giving you over to exile, together with all”—with whom? Not with your wife, your sons and your daughters, but with your friends. And when you are given over to exile, your friends will fall by the sword. Then, as though there were a difference for those who fall by the sword, whether they fall by the sword of enemies or by the sword of others, it says that the friends of the man who threw Jeremiah into the pit will fall by the sword of their enemies.

^{11b} “And your eyes,” it says, “will see these things that are prophesied. But I will give you and all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon,” after your friends have suffered these things. They will carry them off into exile in Babylon and cut them down. For they will cut down the king of Judah and the people of Judah with the sword, and this time the words “of their enemies” are no longer added, as they were in the earlier case of those who were called friends of Pashhur. Then it says: “And I will give all the strength of this city, and all the treasures of the king of Judah, and all the labors of this city into the hands of their enemies.” The enemies will plunder the treasures, take what has been mentioned, and lead Judah and its king away to Babylon. “And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, go into captivity in Babylon. There you will die, and there you will be buried, you and all your friends to whom you prophesied lies.” The whole passage needed to be cut short and made clear. I am not yet speaking of its deep meaning (if we are able to take that in at all), but only of its wording and the plain statement itself. Even an ordinary reader, who looks carefully at the letters and does not read casually, can understand it that far. What then do these words intend? Here is the struggle: to set out the purpose of these writings. And I admit that on my own I cannot explain them. I need, as I said before, the appearing of the power of Jesus, in so far as he is wisdom, in so far as he is word,

in so far as he is truth, so that his appearing may make light upon the face of my soul.

^{12a} [The text is missing here.] The magicians of the Egyptians also had staffs, which were meant to discredit the staffs of Moses and Aaron as not coming from God. But the staffs that come from God overturn those of the sophists and magicians: “Aaron’s swallowed them up.” For his staff was enough for this even without the staff of Moses. So Pashhur “struck Jeremiah the prophet,” and he did it in keeping with his character: “and he struck Jeremiah the prophet.” The words “the prophet” are added as well. Here, then, the man who struck Jeremiah struck the prophet. It is also recorded in Acts that someone struck Paul, ordered to do so by Ananias the high priest. That is why Paul said, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall.” Even to this day the Ebionites, commanded by a lawless high priest of the word, strike the apostle of Jesus Christ with abusive words. And Paul says to such a high priest of the word, “God is going to strike you.” Such a high priest looks handsome on the outside, and is a whitewashed wall. Christ says: “I gave my back to the whips, my cheeks to the slaps, and I did not turn my face away from the shame of spitting.”

^{12b} Simple believers understand this as referring only to that one time, when Pilate scourged him and the Jews plotted against him. But I see Jesus every day “giving his back to the whips.” Go into the synagogues of the Jews, and see Jesus being scourged by them with the tongue of blasphemy. See those gathered from the nations, plotting against Christians, working out how they may seize Jesus; and he “gives his own back to the whips.” Consider the Word of God being insulted, slandered, hated by unbelievers. See that “he gave his cheeks to slaps.” He taught that if someone strikes you on the cheek, you should turn the other as well, and he does this himself. So many strike and scourge him, and he is silent and does not speak. For it is written that he did not speak while he was being scourged. And to this day Jesus has not “turned his face away from the shame of spitting.” Who among those who treat the teaching with contempt does not, in a sense, spit even now on Jesus, who puts up with it?

^{13a} Now that the prophet has been struck, it follows that we should tell of others who were struck, such as the apostle and anyone else who has been struck, and so set beside them what concerns Jesus himself. So “Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and threw him into the cataract that was in the

gate of Benjamin of the upper room.” The cataract belonged to the upper room of Benjamin. Jerusalem, where God’s temple stands, is in the inheritance of Benjamin. Anyone who can listen to the divine readings will find this in the inheritance as recorded in the book of Joshua son of Nun. Since the temple was in the inheritance of Benjamin, whose name means “Son of the right hand” (for nothing about the temple of God is on the left), he threw him “into the cataract that was in the gate of Benjamin of the upper room of the house of the Lord.” Since there was an “upper room in the house of the Lord,” he “threw” the prophet “into the cataract.” Let us also pray that we may now take Jeremiah and bring him up into the upper room “in the house of the Lord.” I will show from Scripture that the upper room stands for the mind that is high and lifted up, because Scripture bears witness of the saints that they received the prophets into upper rooms. In the third book of Kingdoms it is recorded that a widow received Elijah the prophet at Zarephath in the region of Sidon, and she lodged the prophet “in her upper room.” And in the fourth book, the woman who received Elisha prepared a room for him in the upper chamber. The sinner Ahaziah, on the other hand, fell from the upper room. Jesus also commands you not to come down from the housetop. For he says that when such and such things happen, “then let the one on the housetop not come down to take what is in his house.” The one who flees in persecutions is not forbidden to go up onto the housetop; he is told not to “come down from the housetop to take what is in his house.” It is good, then, to be in upper rooms, good to be on housetops and to find oneself somewhere high up. And the wonderful apostles too, as it is recorded of them in Acts, when they were together and devoted themselves to prayer and to the word of God, were in an upper room.

^{13b} And because they were in an upper room, they were not down below. That is why “tongues as of fire appeared to them, distributing themselves.” Peter also, when he was sending up his prayer to God, “went up on the roof.” If he had not gone up on the roof, he would not have seen “a vessel coming down from heaven, like a linen sheet, let down from heaven by four corners.” And she who did the acts of charity, “Tabitha, which when translated is called Dorcas,” was not down below either, but “in the upper room.” Peter went up there and raised her from the dead. Jesus also was about to celebrate this feast, of which we keep the symbol in the Passover, with his disciples. They asked him, “Where do you want us to prepare the Passover for

you?” He said, “As you go, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. He will show you a large upper room, spread with couches, swept and ready. Prepare the Passover there.” So no one who keeps the Passover [as Jesus does, with Jesus] is down below. He is up in a large upper room, a swept upper room, an upper room that is adorned and ready. And if you go up with him to celebrate the Passover, he gives you the cup of the new covenant. He gives you the bread of blessing as well, and he freely gives you his own body and his own blood. For this reason we urge you: “Go up to the height; lift up your eyes on high.” And as for me, if I teach the divine word, the Word says: “Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good news to Zion. Lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good news to Jerusalem. Lift it up, do not be afraid.” I say all this because of Pashhur. There was “an upper room in the house of the Lord, at the gate of Benjamin,” right at hand. Yet he did not bring the prophet up to the upper room. Instead he “threw him into the cataract,” down below.

^{14a} “And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the cataract.” O Lord Jesus, come again! Make these things clear to me, and to those who have come for spiritual food. How is it that “on the next day” he brings “Jeremiah out of the cataract”? For as long as today lasts (and “today” is this whole present age), the sinner throws the prophet down into the cataract. But when the present day stops and tomorrow comes, then he repents and brings him out of the cataract. Then Jeremiah tells him what Pashhur will suffer. What does he say to him? “The Lord has not called your name Pashhur, but Migrant. For thus says the Lord.” This Pashhur, as his sins deserve, is going to be carried off to Babylon. He will not go alone but with his friends. For he is handed over to Nebuchadnezzar, goes off into Confusion, and is punished for his sins, because he “threw the prophet into the cataract.” Who, then, are the friends of Pashhur, whose name goes with the blackness of the mouth? They are all who accepted his words, who were blackened together with his blackened mouth, who took in the teachings of blackness. “And they will fall by the sword of their enemies.” Those appointed over the punishments are the ones who hold the swords and [drink and] make them fall. The Word prophesies about them and says, “And your eyes will see.” These things that are prophesied, he says, “your eyes will see.” “And I will give you and all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon.” Whoever in Judah is found so sinful as to be worthy of the king of Babylon, of Confu-

sion, will be handed over to him. And the king of Babylon takes those who sin. By the historical account the king of Babylon is Nebuchadnezzar, but by the deeper meaning he is the evil one. The sinner is handed over to him, since he is both an enemy and an avenger.

^{14b} That the sinner is handed over to him, let Paul teach you. In one place he speaks about Phygelus and Hermogenes: “whom I handed over to the one who had committed fornication” [the text seems confused here]. Elsewhere he says: “When you are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to hand such a person over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of [the mouth Melania, into the hands of the king of Babylon, and they carry him off to Babylon].” [The last words are garbled in the Greek and mix Paul’s text with Jeremiah’s.] “And they will cut them down with the sword. And I will give all the strength of this city.” It is easy to say that this is prophesied about Jerusalem. All its strength, and everything brought into it, was then handed over to the king of the Babylonians. It is easy to say that this is prophesied about “this city,” which in the days of the Savior was handed over to its enemies. The sons of Jerusalem went into captivity, and the city was torn down. But if you examine the matter and look at the city as made not of stones but of people, you will see that those people, that Jerusalem, were handed over “into the hands of the king of Babylon” because of their impiety and sin against Christ. And you are Jerusalem now. So if the word now threatens Jerusalem, be afraid. If you sin, you are a sinful Jerusalem, and you may be handed over, so that you are no longer Jerusalem but become Babylon and Confusion, when Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians, takes you. “And all the labors” of Jerusalem he hands over. How does he hand over “all the labors”? If after training and struggling you fall away and sin, all your labors have come into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. How are they all your labors? If you fall after toiling much for the truth, it will be said to you: “Did you suffer so many things for nothing?” Those who know that they have drawn up many labors for virtue’s sake ought especially to be afraid. They should fear that, [when they have become Jerusalem] and some sin has happened, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, may [take] their labors.

^{14c} To help you see more clearly how Nebuchadnezzar takes the labors of Jerusalem when she sins, I will use what is written in Ezekiel, which reads like this: “If the righteous man turns away from his righteous deeds and

commits a transgression, I will not remember his righteous deeds which he did.” Why? Because Nebuchadnezzar takes the righteous deeds that were done with labor, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, wipes them out. “And all the honor” of Jerusalem he takes. This is when a person has been given honor by God, and “being in honor” “did not understand” and sinned. So if you know you are in honor, and you were called to that honor, and then you dishonor yourself again through your sins, the Babylonian king takes the honor of Jerusalem. “And all the treasures of the king of Judah.” Jerusalem is rich, but if she sins, the Babylonian takes her treasures. “And they will plunder them and take them and bring them to Babylon. And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, go into captivity in Babylon, and there you will die, and there you will be buried.” The one caught in Confusion dies in Babylon. And the one who is set against being buried together with Christ is buried in Babylon. For there is also a good burial with Christ, through baptism, as in “we were buried with Christ, and we were raised with him.” Being buried with Christ is a mystery. In the same way it is a mystery, [when it happens] through lawlessness, for someone who is a sinner to be buried in Babylon. “And all your friends,” he says, “to whom you prophesied lies, will go there.” Whoever explains the words of God badly, and throws the prophetic words into the pit, does prophesy, but he prophesies lies. For when someone explains the prophetic words, if he speaks truly, he himself also prophesies, and prophesies true things. But if he lies, he is a false prophet, speaking falsely about the prophetic words.

^{15a} Now the first passage is finished, so let us begin the second. Right from its opening words it contains matters of no small importance. As we pay attention to the text, let us again ask Jesus to come. Let us urge him to come more visibly and more brightly, so that when he comes he may teach all of us whether the prophet was speaking the truth in what follows, as we ought to think of a prophet, or was lying, which it is not right to say of a holy prophet. He says to God: “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived. You took hold of me and you prevailed. I became a laughingstock; all day long I have gone on being mocked. For I will laugh at my bitter word; I will call upon faithlessness and misery. For the word of the Lord has become a reproach to me and a mockery all day long. And I said, I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will not speak any more in his name. And it became in my heart like a burning fire, blazing in my bones. I am worn out on every

side and cannot bear it, for I heard the slander of many gathering around me.” They were obviously saying: “Rise up, and let us rise up against him, you men who are his friends. Watch for his scheme, to see whether he will be deceived. Then we will be able to overcome him and take our vengeance on him.” But while they were saying these things, the prophet says: “And the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior. Therefore they pursued, and they could not understand. They were greatly ashamed, because they did not understand their dishonors, which will never be forgotten.” This is the second passage of the reading. How, then, can the prophet say, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived”? Does God deceive? I am at a loss how to handle this text. If, out of regard for God and his word, I look for anything fitting to say about him, what I am going to say needs a generous and careful handling. The prophet speaks as one who has ceased to be deceived. He says, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived,” as though his first schooling and introduction had come to him through deception. It is as though he could not be schooled in the basics and brought into godliness unless he were deceived first, so that later he might come to recognize the deception.

^{15b} One useful example is enough for the matter before us. We speak to children as we guide them. We do not speak to them as to adults. We speak to them as to children who need training. We deceive children by frightening them, so that they stop the undisciplined behavior of children. We frighten them by telling tales of deception, because of what belongs to their childishness. By deception we make them afraid, so that they go to their teachers, recite their lessons, and do what suits the progress of children. We are all children to God, and we need the upbringing that children need. For this reason God, in sparing us, deceives us, even if we do not perceive the deception in time. His purpose is that, once we have grown beyond infancy, we are no longer trained by deception but by actual events. A child is led to fear in one way, and a person who has advanced in age and passed beyond childhood is led in another. For if I am able to guide him by deception [text uncertain], then God who deceives may say, “I will train them by the hearing of their affliction.” I will set out accounts of how God deceives for salvation, and speaks to someone so that the sinner stops doing what he would have done if he had not heard certain words. Take the one who said, “Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” Was he speaking the truth, or was he not speaking the truth, but deceiving with a deception that turns people around?

If that turning around had not happened, it would no longer have been a deception but already the truth of what was said, and the overthrow would have followed for Nineveh. It was up to the hearers. Either they were deceived and believed what was said as true, and so were benefited and not overthrown. Or, if what was said had not come true and they had not been deceived but had realized that it would not happen, they would have despised what was said as a deception. Then they would have suffered not “Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown,” but, I dare to say, things much harsher than that.

15c For the Ninevites had sinned. If they had not repented, then perhaps “Yet three days and Nineveh will be overthrown” would have happened. But suppose that this had not happened; something worse would have happened: they would have been handed over to eternal fire. For this reason a different punishment is stated in the law for those who are being trained like children. But for those to whom “the fullness of time” has come, other punishments are written down. Compare the punishments of sinners under the law with the punishments of sinners under the gospel, and you will see that those people, like infants, heard of punishments suited to infants, while we, as those who have come of age, hear of harsher punishments. If a man or a woman was an adulterer back then, the threat was not Gehenna, not eternal fire, but this: “he shall be stoned with stones”; “let the whole congregation stone him.” The adulterer found among those people, the adulteress found among them, will say when departing: “If only the word had said this of me as well: the people threw stones at me, and I was not being kept for the eternal fire!” For not only the adulterer but also the one who says to his brother “Fool!” is “liable to the Gehenna of fire.” But if the one who says “Fool!” to his brother “will be liable to the Gehenna of fire,” what will the adulterer be liable to? I look for some punishment greater than the Gehenna of fire. And perhaps I would say that Gehenna is for involuntary sins, for those who can be cleansed. But just as, for the good, the righteous, “what God has prepared for those who love him has not entered the heart of man,” so what he has prepared for sinners, for fornicating and committing adultery, “has not entered the heart of man.” For if what makes the one who says “Fool!” to his brother liable had entered the heart, it is clear that what has been prepared for those who have sinned in worse ways is greater than anything that enters the heart.

^{15d} I cannot conceive of anything greater than Gehenna; I only believe that what has been prepared for adulterers is something greater than Gehenna. In this way I come also to the remaining punishments under the law. And I take an apostolic saying that agrees with these and that stays silent about my punishment if I sin, since I do not want to accept “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived” and be rightly deceived. But what does the apostle say? “Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse a punishment, do you think, will he be thought worthy of who has trampled on the Son of God?” Name the punishment, Paul; tell us what it is. But he says, “I do not state it.” The punishment of those who sin under the gospel is greater than what is said, greater than what is heard, greater than what is imagined. For this reason the prophet was brought in like a child: he heard, and was afraid, and was disciplined, and after this was brought to maturity, saying: “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” And you also, as long as you are a child, fear the threats, so that you do not suffer what lies beyond the threats: the eternal punishments, the unquenchable fire, or perhaps something even greater than that, which is laid up for those who have lived beyond the bounds of the right word. May we never experience any of these things. Instead, being brought to maturity in Christ Jesus, may we be justified in a way worthy of the heavenly feasts and of the Passover there, in the ascent in Christ Jesus, to whom belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 20

^{1a} Everything that is written about God, even when it looks unfitting on the surface, must be understood in a way that is worthy of a good God. Who would not say it is unfitting to attribute to God that he has anger, that he uses wrath, that he repents, or even that he sleeps? Yet each of these, in the hands of someone who knows how to hear “dark sayings,” will be found worthy of God. His anger is not fruitless. As his word trains us, so his anger trains us too. Those who have not been trained by the word he trains by anger. So God must use what is called anger just as he uses what is called the Word. For his Word is not the kind of thing that everyone else’s word is. No one else’s word is “a living being.” No one else’s word is “God.” No one else’s word was “in the beginning” with the one whose word it was, even if it is only [from some beginning]. In the same way, God’s anger is called anger,

but not as anyone else's anger is. And just as the Word of God has something foreign about it compared with every other word whatever (he is God, he is a living Word, he has his own existence, he serves the Father), so too, since what is called God's anger has once been given that name, it has something foreign and quite different from the anger of anyone we could define. His wrath likewise has something peculiar to it. It belongs to the purpose of one who rebukes in wrath, wishing the person rebuked to turn back through the rebuke.

1b The word also rebukes, just as the word trains. But the word does not rebuke in the way wrath rebukes. Those who have not been helped by the rebuke that comes from the word will need the rebuke that comes from wrath. We said that there is also a repentance of God that looks unfitting on the surface, since it is written: "I have repented that I anointed Saul as king." You must investigate this repentance in a worthy way. Do not suppose that his repenting has any kinship with the repenting of those who repent. As his word had something set apart, and his anger, and his wrath had something surpassing, and none of them was akin to the things that share their names, so his repentance shares only a name with our repentance. Things are "homonyms" when only the name is common, while the account of the essence that goes with the name is different. So only the name is common between the wrath of God and the wrath of anyone else, and only the name is common between anyone's anger and the anger of God. We must understand repentance in the same way. Anyone who can should ask what God's repentance accomplishes, and what it accomplished. It brought down Saul, who was reigning lawlessly, and raised up for the people a king after God's own heart. For because of that good repentance he said: "I have found a man after my heart, David, son of Jesse." But all this is only my introduction, because the reading from Jeremiah begins like this: "You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived."

2a We are asking whether it works like this. Everyone else's wrath is evil, but God's wrath is meant to expose and correct. Everyone else's anger is harsh, but what is called God's anger is meant to train. The regret of any of us accuses the weakness of the one [who acted] before the regret. But in God's case his regret does not accuse God. It speaks of the outward circumstances that prompt the regret. In the same way we must understand that God's deception is of a different kind from our deception, the kind by which we de-

ceive. So what is this deception from God? The prophet understood it. When he stopped being deceived, and knew the benefit of having been deceived, he said, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” First I will use a Hebrew tradition that reached us through a man who had fled because of faith in Christ. He had come up from the law and had come to the place where we live. He told a story that may look like a myth or may be a sound account able to win over those who hear it, as a way into the words “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” He said something like this. God does not rule as a tyrant but as a king. As king he does not use force but persuades. He wants those under him to give themselves willingly to his plan, so that a person’s goodness comes from willing choice and not from compulsion. Paul knew this, and wrote to Philemon about Onesimus in the letter to Philemon: “that your good deed might not be by compulsion but of your own free will.”

^{2b} So the God of the universe could have worked in us what is thought of as good, so that we gave alms by compulsion and practiced self-control by compulsion. But he did not wish to. For this reason he does not command us to do what we do out of grief or compulsion, so that what is done may be voluntary. He looks, so to speak, for a way for someone to do willingly what God wants. The tradition told me something like this. God wanted to send Jeremiah to prophesy to all the nations, and before all the nations, to the people. But the prophecies were rather grim, for they announced punishments, by which each person would be punished according to what he deserved. God also knew the prophet’s inclination, that he did not want to prophesy the worse things to the people of Israel. So he arranged to say: “Take this cup, and you shall give it to drink to all the nations to whom I send you.” God commanded Jeremiah to take a cup. To encourage him to take the cup of unmixed wine, he said, “And I will send you to all the nations, with this cup of unmixed wine.” Jeremiah heard that he was being sent to all the nations to serve them a cup of anger, a cup of punishments. He did not suspect that Israel too would have to drink from the cup of punishment. So he was deceived and took the cup in order to give all the nations a drink. Once he had taken the cup, he heard: “And you shall first give drink to [text missing].”

^{2c} He had expected one thing, and something else met him. About this he says, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” Isaiah gave a similar ac-

count. He too did not know what he would be commanded to say to the people. He hears God saying, as it is written, "Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?" He answered, it says, "Here I am; send me." Then he hears: "Go and say to this people: You will hear with your ears and never understand, and you will look and look and never see. For the heart of this people has grown fat," and so on. Since he did not know what he would prophesy, or that he would have to threaten the people with such things, he said, "Here I am; send me." Because of this, it says, in what follows there is "a voice of [a lion; perhaps 'of one speaking']: Cry out." And he did not answer as one eager to do what was commanded. He said, "What shall I cry?" For he was afraid that he might again hear what he heard in the earlier prophecy: "Go and say to this people: You will hear with your ears and never understand." "What then shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flower of grass," and so on. In these words he heard nothing against Israel. This is what that man told us, handing down the meaning of "You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived."

^{3a} (Jer 19) For my part, I pray that what I receive from those who teach me I will not merely keep. I pray that I will not bury the talent in the ground, as the passage says, nor tie up in a cloth the mina of those who teach something useful. Instead I pray to multiply the lessons I receive from the one who hands them on and is able to hand on what is useful. I pray to make the mina, whether of the gospel, or of an apostle, or of a prophet, or of the law, yield many times over. So when I heard these words, I began to think to myself about "You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived." And as I think about it, I pray to find something true for this passage. Perhaps it is like this. A father wants to deceive his son, who is still a small child, for the child's good, because the child cannot be helped in any other way unless he is deceived. A doctor works to deceive a sick man who cannot be healed unless he accepts words of deception. In the same way the God of all acts, since he has set before himself the benefit of the human race. Let the doctor say to the sick man, "You must be cut, you must be cauterized, you must suffer other, harsher things." The patient would not hand himself over. So sometimes the doctor says something else. He hides the cutting iron, the blade that divides, under a sponge. Again, if I may put it this way, he hides the nature of what is bitter, the unpleasant medicine, under honey. He wants not to harm but to heal the one he is treating. The whole of divine Scripture is full of such

medicines. Some are good things that are hidden, and some are bitter things that are hidden. Suppose you see a father threatening his son as if he hated him, speaking fearful words to him and not showing his affection, but hiding his love for his son. You will see that he wants to deceive the child. For it is not good for the son to know his father's love, his friendly disposition. The boy would go slack and would not be trained. For this reason the father hides the sweetness of his affection and shows the bitterness of his threat. God does something like this, in proportion, as a father and as a doctor.

^{3b} There are some bitter things that heal even the most righteous and the wisest man. [The text seems to have a gap here.] For everyone who has sinned must be punished for his sins. "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked." "Whether fornicator or adulterer, or effeminate, or homosexual, or thief, or drunkard, or slanderer, or swindler, they will not inherit the kingdom of God." If this is understood and taken exactly, by people who cannot see the doctor's iron under the sponge, by people who cannot perceive the bitter medicine under the honey, someone will lose heart. For which of us is not aware in himself of having drunk without good judgment and been drunk? Which of us is clean from theft, and from failing to provide what is needed as one ought? Yet see what the word says: "Do not be deceived, for these will not inherit the kingdom of God." The mystery in this passage has to be hidden, so that the many do not lose heart, so that they do not learn the facts and expect their departure from this life to be not a rest but a punishment. For who will be found to be a Paul, able to say, "It is far better to depart and be with Christ"? My own wood must be burned in me. For I know that if I depart, my own wood must be burned in me. And what wood do I have? I have slanders for wood, I have drunken bouts for wood, thefts for wood, and countless other pieces of wood I have built into my building. You see that all this escapes the notice of most believers, and it is well that it does. Each of us supposes that because he has not worshiped idols and has not committed fornication (if only we were clean at least in such matters!), he will be saved when he leaves this life. Do we not see that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive what is due for what he did through the body, whether good or bad"? Do we not see the one who said, "You only have I known out of all the tribes of the earth; therefore I will take vengeance on you for all your practices"? He did not say some of them and not others.

3c So then, the doctor sometimes hides his surgical knife under a soft, gentle sponge. The father also hides his tender affection behind the look of a threat. Some deceptions remove fatty growths and swollen veins and anything else that harms the make-up of the body; another removes a child's lack of discipline and softness. The prophet understood God to be doing something of this kind in a hidden way. He saw how he had been deceived by God for his good, and he says, "You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived." God brought him to so great a grace that he prayed and said to God, "Deceive me, if that is for my benefit." For the deception that comes from God is one thing, and the deception that comes from the serpent is another. Notice what the woman says to God: "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The serpent's deception drove Adam and his wife out of God's paradise. But the deception that came to the prophet who said, "You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived," brought him to so great a grace of prophecy: it increased the power in him, it brought him to maturity, and it enabled him to serve the purpose of God's word without fearing any human being. So let us also understand these things, and let us pray, for the present and for the future, to be deceived by God. Only let the serpent not deceive us. Something related is written elsewhere, for it is said in Isaiah: "For the Lord mixed for them a spirit of error." You will stop there too and consider what the spirit of error does when it is mixed by God. And it is fitting that God did not give the spirit of error undiluted; rather, as the prophet put it, he mixed it.

4a I want to take a risk and give an example of people who were helped by being deceived. There are some who practise purity and chastity for this reason, and others who practise being married only once, because they expected that a person who has had marital relations would be lost, and that a person who has married twice would be lost. Let us compare the cases themselves. What is better for the woman who has married only once: to be deceived, to suppose that a twice-married woman is punished and handed over to eternal punishment, and so to stay married only once and pure, or to know the truth and marry a second time? I think anyone who sees the consequence can say this: it would be more blessed to stay pure and not marry twice without being deceived, and to see that the twice-married woman does share in some salvation, though not in as great a blessedness as the one who could have married twice and kept herself pure. But if she cannot do this, it is better to be deceived, thinking that the twice-married are lost, and to remain pure because

of the deception, than to have known the truth and to have come to be in the lesser rank, that of the twice-married. You will find something like this also in some who practise complete chastity and purity. Many other things could be found that we do under a deception and that benefit us. And how many people who are thought wise have found the truth about punishment, and have gone through the matter of the deception, so to speak, and have ended up living worse lives? It would have profited them to think as they did before, about “their worm will not die,” and that “their fire will not be quenched,” and that “they will be a sight for all flesh,” and that “the chaff will be burned up with unquenchable fire.” But if they imagine something different from their first understanding, and so are “about to despise the riches of God’s kindness, forbearance and patience,” see whether it is not true that, just because they did not seem to have been deceived, they stored up for themselves “wrath on the day of wrath, of revelation and of God’s righteous judgment.” They would not have stored it up if they had been deceived.

4b All this is said because of the deception that comes from God, since the prophet said, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” Let us now look separately at the words “I was deceived.” Why did he not say only, “You deceived me, Lord,” but add, “and I was deceived”? Sometimes one person may be working a deception while another is on guard and is not deceived. But when one person works at deceiving and the other does not guard himself against being deceived, and falls into the deception, then he might say, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” Now if I were in the prophet’s place, I might say something like this. Whatever the serpent says to me, whether he tells me the truth or wants to deceive me, I am suspicious of his words. I am convinced that, whether he deceives me or speaks truly, he harms me. Even his truth does harm. Nothing useful comes from the serpent, since “a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.” But whatever God says to me, and I am persuaded that it is God who speaks, I am ready to give myself over to him. If he speaks the truth, I accept it. If he wants to deceive me, I am willingly deceived; let God alone deceive me. And because I give myself over, persuaded that it is God who speaks, even to being deceived, and because I do not pry, wanting to be deceived not by another but by God, I therefore say: “Not only did you work the deception, but I also underwent being deceived by you.” In this sense I say, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” And what fol-

lows when God is the one deceiving and a human being the one deceived? "You prevailed and you were able." Once he has prevailed, he is able. But if he does not prevail, then I need labors. "You prevailed and you were able."

^{5a} Next he says: "I came to the passage..." I heard these things: that Jeremiah lived in the times of the most sinful people (in his days, at any rate, the captivity took place). They were so sinful that they mocked and laughed and jeered whenever the prophet spoke the prophetic opening, "Thus says the Lord." Those who heard laughed and mocked what was said. So the one who had been deceived, and had been helped by being deceived, took care not to say "Thus says the Lord." For this reason he himself, wanting to deceive for the sake of their benefit, said: "I am speaking to you my own words, since you do not listen to the words of the Lord." Then they lent their ears as if to the words of Jeremiah, and they were hearing the words of God. The man who handed the passage down to me told me these things, as he examined the openings and beginnings of the prophecies. So the beginning of Jeremiah's prophecy is, in our version, as the Seventy handed it down (I do not know what they had in view): "The word of God that came to Jeremiah, son of Hilkihah, of the priests." But in the Hebrew and the remaining editions it is: "Words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkihah." All of them agree in saying, "Words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkihah." Why then "words of Jeremiah"? Because his opening, in speaking to those unwilling to listen, was: "Hear my words." We too sometimes do such things when it seems useful to us. At times we bring words to people from the nations, wanting to bring them to the faith. If we see that they are prejudiced against Christianity, that they loathe the name and hate to hear "This is a Christian word," we do not pretend that we are speaking a Christian word, though it is a useful one.

^{5b} But when we have built up that speech as well as we can, and we think we are winning the hearer, who has not listened to what was said in a casual way, then we admit that this praiseworthy speech was a speech of Christians. We do something close to what the prophet did when he no longer said, "Thus says the Lord," but, "Hear the words of me, Jeremiah." All this is because of the words, "I became a laughingstock." And do we get angry if we are ever laughed at while we are speaking, when a man like Jeremiah says, "I became a laughingstock; all day long I was continually mocked"? Why do I say Jeremiah? My own Jesus was mocked too. For it says, "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they mocked him." But the

Lord mocks all who mock the words of God. "I became a laughingstock." See what kinds of lives the prophets lived. At one moment they were laughed at, at another they were in danger, struck down and stoned by the people, killed, hated, driven out. They suffered and endured all of this so that, in keeping with God's will, seeking the glory that comes from the One alone, they might proclaim the word and reach the end that comes from God. "All day long I was continually mocked." He spent the day being mocked.

^{6a} "For at my bitter word I will laugh." Laughter is a kind of promise, and the patriarch Isaac is named after that promise, for his name is translated "Laughter." That laughter is a promise is clear from the words, "Blessed are those who weep now"; the promise is "for they will laugh." Just as there is a promise, "They will be called sons of God," and "They will see God," and "They will inherit the earth," and "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven," so laughter is a promise. The opposite of that promise is the weeping of the one who is called blessed. But you will ask whether, in this good laughter, the weeping that is blessed fits with it in one sense or another, while a different weeping is set against it, the weeping kept in store for those who are pitied for the opposite reasons. For it says, "Woe to those who laugh now, for they will mourn and weep." So the weeping that is blessed is one thing, and the weeping stored up for those who have lived badly is another. Whether that second weeping also has some useful end, I do not know. Why do I say this? Hear Paul. He taught, and he worked at it, saying that he grieved his hearers. And he admits that he was most glad just when someone was grieved by him. For he says, "And who is it that makes me glad, if not the one who is grieved by me?" And if anyone is able to move the soul of a hearer who has sinned greatly, he prays to speak words of this kind. Spoken with power, with order, with divinity and with holy thoughts, they will shake the soul of the hearer and move him to mourning, to weeping and to tears. So the speaker rejoices [when he sees the audience delighted and full of what is said].

^{6b} For when a speaker leads people toward the promises, as "through the narrow and hard way" of sorrow "to life," he leads them through weeping to the laughter that is called blessed. But when he does not achieve this, I am afraid that he may be saying something like this: "Woe to those who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep." Why have I said this to you? I wanted to hint at what he means by "at my bitter word I will laugh." I wanted to show a laughter that comes out of weeping, and the other weeping which those

who laugh here will weep, perhaps because God is working to produce weeping in them. For “there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” And God works this because he sees that the one who weeps over his own sins, who laments over his own lawless acts, has already come to a true awareness of his own evils. If only each one of us would say, over each sin, “Every night I will wash my bed; with my tears I will drench my couch.” If only each of us, weeping over his own sins, would say, “My tears have become my bread day and night.” If my word is rather bitter here, and bitter because I am distressed for their sake, then the hearers are put off. Those who are rebuked are burdened by the speaker. But I know that the end of my bitter word is to laugh, and to laugh with the laughter of the blessed. The prophet perhaps knew this when he said, “At my bitter word I will laugh.” Already there is “a bitter word,” but I do not yet laugh. “At my bitter word I will laugh.”

^{7a} “I will call upon faithlessness and misery.” The righteous man calls upon God; the unrighteous man also calls upon wisdom. For it says, “It will be that when you call upon me, I will not listen to you.” That is said of the unrighteous. And it is clear that the righteous also call upon wisdom at times: “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Here, though, the prophet says, “I will call upon faithlessness and misery,” as if he called upon faithlessness the way one calls upon God, and upon misery the way one calls upon the Lord. Is it a good thing you are calling upon, Jeremiah, when you announce, “I will call upon faithlessness and misery”? But we must consider the agreements we make and the breaking of them, because there are times when one makes an agreement badly. And after making a bad agreement, I wish we would call upon faithlessness. So too, if I consider “the wide and roomy road that leads to destruction,” and see that I am not miserable while I travel on it, then I move away “from the wide and roomy road” and come “to the narrow and constricted one.” There I become miserable, and I say, “I will call upon misery.” I am about to break the agreements I made with the world and worldly things, so that I may take up heavenly agreements. “I will call upon faithlessness.” So I leave “the wide and roomy road” and come “to the narrow and constricted one,” so that I may become miserable as Paul was, and I say, “I will call upon misery.” For not every person will say, “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” Only the one who has understood the body of death, the one who

wants to be rescued from this body of death, will say, “Wretched man that I am.”

7b But the lover of the body, the common sort of man, who does not believe in the age to come, does not say, “Wretched man that I am.” He counts himself happy to be a man, and happy to be in the body of death. So if I can understand how Paul came to say, “Wretched man that I am,” though I have not yet called upon misery, I will call upon it by breaking the agreements I made with wickedness, and I will say as Jeremiah did, “I will call upon faithlessness and misery.” For he did not say, “I will call upon faithlessness toward God.” I want to give an example from Scripture of a righteous person breaking agreements, to show how that person by deed called upon faithlessness. Judith made an agreement with Holofernes: for so many days she would go out and pray to God, and after those days she would give herself to the bed of Holofernes. Holofernes accepted this agreement. He let Judith go outside the camp to pray. What ought Judith to have done? Keep the agreement or break it? All agree: break it. For to break the agreements made with Holofernes was a blessed thing before God. Judith was about to break her agreements with Holofernes; she was about to say, “I will call upon faithlessness.” And she did call upon faithlessness. I wish that I too might become such a person, that I might say, “I will call upon faithlessness,” and call upon faithlessness toward the serpent, toward the devil. The serpent once made an agreement with Eve, and the serpent was a friend to the woman, and she to him. But God, being good, arranged for this agreement to be dissolved and this evil friendship to be broken up. And as a good God he says, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.”

7c So let us listen with good sense to how God creates enmity toward one party, in order to create friendship toward Christ. It is impossible to be a friend of opposites at the same time. Just as “no one can serve two masters,” so no one can be a friend both of God and of mammon, a friend both of Christ and of the serpent. Friendship with Christ must create enmity toward the serpent, and friendship with the serpent must breed enmity toward Christ. “I will call upon faithlessness and misery.” To help you understand better the words “I will call upon misery,” I will describe something that happens to those who practice self-discipline. Often a man has the chance to marry and avoid trouble, while the flesh rises up against the spirit. Yet he chooses not to use his freedom to marry. He chooses instead to suffer hard-

ship and toil, to “batter the body with fasting” and bring it into slavery by abstaining from certain foods, and in every way to “put to death the deeds of the body” by the spirit. Has such a person not called upon misery, when he could have given himself over to luxury and pleasure and not called upon misery at all? So if anyone is able to imitate the prophet, let him call upon faithlessness, as we have explained, and let him also call upon misery in his disciplines. It also happens that the account about Jeremiah is true, that he lived in purity. For the Lord said to him, “You shall not take a wife, and you shall not have children.” And he lived in purity. For he called upon faithlessness and misery.

^{8a} “Because the word of the Lord has become to me a reproach.” Blessed is Jeremiah, who had no other reproach than the word of the Lord. But we, wretched as we are, have reproaches that come not from the word of the Lord but from our own sins. We are reproached for the things in which we stumble and have stumbled, and we are abused for our wickedness. The Savior does not want us to be reproached in that way. He says, “Blessed are you when they reproach you and persecute you and say every evil word against you for my sake.” “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy.” So he says, “The word of the Lord has become to me a reproach and a mockery all day long.” Then notice how honest the prophets are. They do not hide their own sins, as we do. They speak of sins committed not only in their own time but in all generations. I myself hesitate to confess my sins before the few who are here, because those who hear me will condemn me. But Jeremiah felt no shame over something he had suffered that was sinful. He wrote down his own sin. What follows in the passage was a sin: “And I said, I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will no longer speak in his name.” You were taught to do everything in the name of the Lord, to act in the name of God. Yet you say, “I will not name the name of the Lord”? What name will you name instead? “You shall not remember the name of other gods in your hearts.” And yet you say, “I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will no longer speak in his name”? So he speaks as one who has suffered something human, which we too have often been in danger of suffering. This is especially so when someone knows in his own conscience that he once endured hardship, suffering and hatred for the sake of teaching and the word. He often says, “I am withdrawing. Why should I have all this trouble? If I am in trouble because

of this, because of teaching and putting out the word, why not rather withdraw into solitude and quiet?"

^{8b} The prophet suffered something like this when he said, "And I said: I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will no longer speak in his name." But the Lord is good, for he prevents sins like this in men of such stature. He did not let the prophet stand by what he had just said. Even here he made Jeremiah call down "unbelief" on himself, and set aside what he had said. For he said, "I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will no longer speak in his name." Then he says, "It became in my heart like a burning fire, flaming in my bones, and I am helpless on every side and cannot bear it." The word of the Lord had become a fire burning his heart. "It became in my heart like a flaming fire, burning in my bones." Jeremiah threw off the sin he had committed when he said, "I will not name the name of the Lord, and I will no longer speak in his name." And he threw it off in the very moment he spoke. I wish that I, at the very moment I sin and speak a sinful word, would feel that a fire had come into my heart, burning and flaming, so that I could not bear it. The word is about to venture something, though I do not know whether it is good for such an audience as this. It has said that there is a kind of fire, not a fire perceived by the senses, which punishes the one punished with such pain that he cannot bear it. For he said, "It became in my heart like a flaming fire," and "burning" not only in my heart but also "in my bones, and I am helpless on every side and cannot bear it." I fear that what is laid up for us may be like this: a fire arising as it arose in the heart of Jeremiah. But we have not experienced it. If we had experienced it, and if the two fires were set before us, this fire and the outer fire we see in those who are burned by the rulers of the nations, we would choose that outer fire rather than this one.

^{8c} For that fire burns the surface, but this one burns the heart. Beginning from the heart, it reaches through all the bones, and passing through the bones it spreads over the whole person who is burning, and it comes in such a way that the one burning cannot bear it. Who, under this fire, is able to say, "And I cannot bear it"? I know that even robbers have managed to endure that other fire, the pain that comes from it. The pain from this fire is of a different kind, the one Jeremiah described when he said, "And it became in my heart like a burning fire, flaming in my bones, and I am helpless on every side and cannot bear it." The Savior, who said, "I came to cast fire upon the

earth,” is the one who kindles that fire. And because the Savior kindles that fire, for those who begin to listen to him he begins with the fire, and first casts fire into their heart. This is what Simon and Cleopas confess when they say, concerning his words, “Was not our heart burning on the road, as he opened the Scriptures to us?” Here the heart of Simon and of Cleopas is burned with fire. Hear them as they say, “Was not our heart burning?” 9. Who is worthy now to receive that fire in the heart, so that he does not receive it there, in the other place? I want to describe who it is that has this fire in the heart. Picture for me two people who have committed the same kind of sin, the foul, unclean sin of fornication. Of these two who have fornicated, one is not grieved or pained or stung. He experiences what was said in Proverbs about the immoral woman: “Whatever she does, she washes herself and says she has done nothing out of place.” But look at the other. After his fall he cannot keep quiet. He is punished in his conscience and tormented in his heart. He cannot eat or drink; he fasts not by decision but from the pain of repentance. Picture such a man for me: gloomy and worn down all day long as he goes about, groaning aloud from the sighing of his heart, seeing his sin before him, constantly accusing him to his face.

sd And look at such a person: he is punished not for one day or one night, but for a long time. Which of the two do you prefer? Which do you say has hopes with God? The one who committed fornication and gave it no thought, but became callous, as one who has handed himself over to licentiousness? Or the one who mourns and weeps after a single sin? This second man [has grounds for hope]. The more he is burned by the fire of grief, the more mercy he receives, and he has enough time for his breaking, as much time as is given for punishment to that man who fornicated and was grieved. And since this time of punishment here is profitable to him, the apostle took pains to punish the one who had fornicated. When he had punished him with grief and saw that the grief was enough, he said, “Lest such a man be swallowed up by excessive grief, confirm your love toward him.” Let each of us examine his own conscience and see what he has sinned, because he needs to be punished. Let him pray to God that this fire which was in Jeremiah would come upon him, and then the fire that was on Simon and Cleopas. But the one who has both sinned and has not cared will be kept for that other fire. “And it became in my heart like a burning fire, flaming in my bones, and I am relaxed on every side and cannot bear it, for I heard the

slander of many gathering around.” The blameless, blessed Jeremiah (I say this setting aside that small sin, and any other slight thing he did) was slandered by many. But the slander of the many was praise for him with God. For those who slandered him said, “Band together, and let us band together against him, all you men who are his friends. Watch for his plan, and he will be deceived.” They wanted to deceive him with a different deception, a deadly one, the opposite of the deception about which he said, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived.” And these who band together against him say, “And we will prevail against him, and we will take our vengeance from him.” Those who were rebuked for their own sins think they have been wronged, and because they think they have been wronged they say, “We will take our vengeance from him.”

^{8c} Those who sawed Isaiah in two did something like this. They acted as men wronged (since the prophecies turned them back, punished them, rebuked them, and reproached them), so they sawed him in two and condemned him with a vote of death. But Jeremiah says about these who banded together against him, “And the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior.” If we become the kind of people we ought to be, and accept that fire when it comes upon us for our sins, as it did upon Jeremiah and those like him, then after this the Lord is with us “like a mighty warrior.” “Therefore they persecuted, and they could not understand.” [The Jews who persecuted him: “They were greatly ashamed, and did not understand their dishonor”; though dishonored for so long a time, they do not name their own sins.] The Lord was with the one being persecuted, and so the persecuted one could not be put into their hands. Might it be, then, since many things in Jeremiah are referred to the Savior, that this too can be of that kind? For “Band together, and let us band together against him” was said also about the Savior. And the “Lord” was with him “like a mighty warrior. Therefore they persecuted, and they could not understand,” the Jews who persecuted him. “They were greatly ashamed, and did not understand their dishonor.” Though dishonored for so long a time, they do not name their own sins, “which will not be forgotten forever.” Instead they suppose that in this age their lawless deeds will be forgotten. But we see that their lawless deeds will not be forgotten forever. And as we see this, we remember the words, “Do not be high-minded, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, how much more will he not spare” the unnatural ones? So the “Lord of hosts” is with us,

“who tests the righteous, who understands the kidneys and hearts.” The Lord approves what is just and rejects what is unjust. He is, so to speak, a banker of the just and the unjust. And this same Lord “understands kidneys and hearts.” I ask what the difference is between “understanding kidneys and hearts” and “examining hearts and kidneys.” He does not examine the hearts and kidneys of everyone, but of those who have sinned. I take “examine” in the sense it has in everyday life, when it is said of people being put to the torture.

8f In the law courts some people conduct the examination, some are examined, and some are in the severest suffering. But the Lord alone has a new kind of examination, for he is the one who examines hearts, and to the Lord alone belongs the searching of hearts and kidneys. Robbers here are examined in their sides by the order of the governor. There, however, a person is not examined by an order of God but by the Lord himself, who tests kidneys and hearts. Unless perhaps I should say here that the one receiving the order is the Son, the one giving the order is the Father, and the Word is the one who examines hearts and kidneys. And I think that, of all tortures and all sufferings, the heaviest are those that come from the Word when he examines both hearts and kidneys. So let us do everything we can so that we are not handed over to that examination. I think those who are handed over to the “tormentors” mentioned in the Gospel suffer less than that. For they are handed over to many, perhaps to a greater number of tormentors at the beginning, since they are not yet worthy to be handed over to the one Word who examines hearts and kidneys. That rich man was not yet worthy to be handed over to the one who examines hearts and kidneys, and so he was tormented by several. Whether he suffers this later or not, let the one who is able examine it. But what awaits us is this: tormentors, and the one who examines hearts and kidneys over our sins. If we are not quickly set free from those sins, we will be in them. So let us rise and ask for help from God, that we may be blessed in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

P A R T T W O

Prophets and Job: Fragments

*What remains in Greek of Origen on Jeremiah, Lamentations,
Job and the earlier books of the Bible.*

Fragments on Jeremiah

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 240–250

Greek fragments of Origen's commentary on Jeremiah, taken from the catena tradition, followed by a few short fragments on Jeremiah preserved in the Philocalia, the anthology of Origen compiled by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus.

FRAGMENT 1

Jeremiah 1:10. The righteous person is not "in youth," since "having been made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled long years." For the words "Do not say, I am younger" are addressed to someone who is not in blameworthy ways. Rehoboam was the kind of person who was in them: he "abandoned the counsel of the elders" and followed that of the younger men. For this reason he did not keep the kingdom as he had received it.

FRAGMENT 2

Jeremiah 1:13, 14. The pot that is being heated is heated "from the face of the north," for this enemy is at the same time an avenger. So the one who has sinned, whether in blasphemy, "is handed over to Satan, that he may be taught not to blaspheme," or in sexual immorality, is handed over "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Whom does it heat? Those who dwell in the land, not those who live there as sojourners. For he looses "fiery arrows" on those who do not guard their hearts with all vigilance, so that they are set on fire by any sin whatever.

FRAGMENT 3

Jeremiah 5:6. He speaks of those who strike them, naming a lion, a wolf and a leopard. It seems that the plotting aimed at people's actions comes from those figuratively called lions, while the plotting aimed at knowledge comes from those who want to harm the soul's power of clear sight. For the leopard is said to leap especially at the eyes. The lion, as the story goes, when it has

grown old, haunts the cities, wanting to hunt human beings. It is also said that when its bones are broken or crushed, fire comes out. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar would be both lion and leopard: he took the city and, like a leopard, tore out its eyes, the king together with the leading men, and later he also put out the eyes of Zedekiah. His bones might be understood as Nebuzaradan, who set the city on fire.

FRAGMENT 4

Jeremiah 7:21. He teaches us to examine clearly what the matter of sacrifices is about, and the oracles give a starting point, saying: "A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit," and "Sacrifice a sacrifice of righteousness." But the Savior was turning back those who were not like this and who were stirred up about bodily sacrifices, saying: "If you had known what it is, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." And that this kind of legislation is about mystical things, Paul taught when he said: "who serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things."

FRAGMENT 5

Jeremiah 8:7. The turtledove and the swallow, the sparrows of the field, are the understanding hearers and those able to say better things. They took care to make their own entrances at the right time, so that what is said reaches those who hear it, the swallow's coming in coinciding with the turtledove's coming in.

FRAGMENT 6

Jeremiah 10:16. Aquila and Theodotion have rendered it: "For he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance." But if he is that one, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance, and the nations too have received an inheritance, according to "Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance," then the nations also will be Israel.

FRAGMENT 7

Jeremiah 11:11, 12. God rightly does not listen to those who did not listen to him. And the demons will not be able to save what is just for those who offered incense to them, when the time of evils comes. So when God does not listen, it is a terrible thing to seek help from demons. Rather, we must hold fast to God, who has turned away because of sins that were committed, but who does not despise a great and persistent flight to him for refuge.

FRAGMENT 8

Jeremiah 11:14 (11). He did not say, “I will not listen to you,” but “to them.” This shows that even then, if they repent and you ask on their behalf, I will listen.

FRAGMENT 9

Jeremiah 15:6, 7. He called the abandonment an active work, for God is said to destroy his own tent when he lifts it up. In another sense, a destruction worthy of God’s hand is the change from wickedness to virtue, as in “I will bring my hands upon you, and I will refine you to purity,” the former ruinous damage that sin caused in us having been destroyed. “I will scatter them” is of the same kind. Since they were of one accord in their ungodliness toward me, I will break up their most wicked gathering and agreement. In the same way he divided the tongues of those who built the tower, preventing a ungodliness that was growing in unity. The words “they were made childless, they destroyed my people” carry an accusation against the rulers and priests. For these were in the place of fathers to the peoples and became bereft of children, since in place of godly teaching they introduced ungodliness. But perhaps it is not even possible to destroy a people without first making one’s own soul childless of the offspring that come from virtue. For no one who is good destroys another.

FRAGMENT 10

The souls of the ungodly may be called widows, because they have lost Christ the bridegroom. When they perish, their mothers suffer too. These are the ones who “gave birth to them in Christ,” who “labored in birth until Christ was formed in them,” and who, after the milk, raised them on solid food to young manhood. The multitude of the widows is not “like the stars of heaven” but like the sand of the sea. According to the letter, very many fell in war, so their wives became widows, and their mothers suffered.

FRAGMENT 11

He commands us not to lift up a load of sins, and not to say, “They have weighed on me like a heavy burden.” In this way we may become kings and rulers, sitting securely on the throne of David, which is the church of Christ, so that it may be said of us, “You set a crown of precious stone upon their head.” People like this also ride on chariots and horses. They hold the body in check with the bridle and restrain its irrational impulses. In this way the

city too will be inhabited forever. From every side, because of the virtue of its leaders and the excellent conduct of its inhabitants, there will come those who bring gifts. They will come from the cities of Judah, which are those who confess to God. They will come from those who surround Jerusalem, "Vision of Peace." They will come from the land of Benjamin, "of the Son," the level country, which has no "height raised up against the knowledge of God." They will come from the mountain, which is the gospel word, and from the region toward the south, which is opposed to the one who blows from the north. These people will bring a "holy sacrifice, well-pleasing to God," the dedication of the soul, and spiritual whole burnt offerings. By the Spirit they burn up all matter that is liable to the eternal fire. Their prayer is "like incense, and the lifting up of their hands an evening sacrifice." They also offer frankincense, which is translated "Whitening," because they cast off every dark disposition. So the words fit them, "Who is this that comes up made white?" In this way they will be able to bring their praise into the house of the Lord, "having no spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind" rubbed upon the church of Christ. And if nothing like that comes from us, we will [endure] the things of the threat that is brought upon us.

FRAGMENT 12

The apostle showed what a house built with righteousness is when he said, "You are God's field, God's building." He also says, "No one can lay another foundation besides the one that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. But if anyone builds on it," and so on. So the believer has Christ Jesus as his foundation through the one who taught him. Then someone builds on that foundation. If he builds well, "gold" is the doctrines of the truth, "silver" is the saving word, and "precious stones" are a structure built from virtues. But if he builds badly, putting evil things on Jesus, I mean "wood, hay, straw," how is he not ungodly? The "woe" comes upon him, the one who builds his house not with righteousness. The one who makes a lofty building that is not according to the word of God and the truth does not make upper rooms "in judgment." Understand it in the same way of those who teach either the truth or "falsely named knowledge." For example, Paul builds the church as a house with righteousness, but Timothy, Luke and people like them he builds as upper rooms in judgment.

FRAGMENT 13

You could say that what is said about the false teachers follows from what came before. Solomon says, "He who stores up treasures with a lying tongue pursues vain things, and will come into a snare of death." Such people build houses for themselves under the name of "church," but it is a church "of evildoers." To them it is said with irony: "You built yourself a well-proportioned house, with airy upper rooms." In those rooms they thought they had built a place of refreshment. You suppose that through the windows you have lit your buildings with the light of knowledge, and that you used incorruptible timbers to build the house. You paint it with red ochre, imitating the blood of Christ. "But you will not reign, even though you were provoked in the cedar of your father." The cedar, the father of the sinner, is a tall, proud tree that stands opposed. It stands for the devil, or for the ruler of wicked words. Those who build such houses will perish by famine, for they will neither eat nor drink. They did not even know righteousness, since they did not know Christ. Doing what is right, he says, belongs to those who know God. As for those who are not like that, their eyes are not good, because they do not see the truth. Nor is their heart [good], since it is full of false doctrines. By these doctrines they make others stumble and murder their souls, pouring out innocent blood with a false and deceitful tongue. This is worse than slaughter by the sword.

FRAGMENT 14

Jeremiah calls this Joiakim "Jechoniah." Pharaoh Necho gave the name Joiakim to his father, who was called Eliakim. The Babylonian killed him and threw him out before the gate, as the present prophet says, and as Josephus says in the tenth book of his *Antiquities*. The word "signet" is given as "seal" by the Rest [of the translators]. Anyone who takes up the image through repentance becomes a seal, or signet ring, in the right hand of God. By the right hand of God, who sets the sheep "on the right," good works are understood. The father gave this seal to the prodigal son when he returned. If Jechoniah had done this, he would have become a pattern of godliness for those who obey. But it did not happen. Still, he seemed to obey the prophet who said, "The one who goes out to join the Chaldeans who have shut you in will live." For he went out, bringing his mother and the mighty men with him, and defected to the Babylonians. But suppose, he says, that he had

shown complete repentance, so that he became “a seal of the righteousness [that comes] in circumcision,” as the divine apostle puts it, and so seemed to be in God’s right hand. Even then he would surely have been handed over to pay the penalty for his earlier sins, though a milder one. For in Babylon he was brought to his senses in prison and in chains. Later, under Evil-merodach, he was moved to relief, sharing the king’s table. And so he ended his life in a foreign land.

FRAGMENT 15

He forbids us not simply to listen to a prophet, but to listen to words of prophets that are put forward as imitation. The one who listens to a prophet such as Moses is listening not to Moses but to the Lord, who speaks through him. The false prophets make people vain. By not turning them back, they make their hearer vain, since they speak “a vision of the heart.” For a mind that applies itself to matters without God’s help speaks a vision of the heart. It does not speak from the mouth of the One who supplies the words and gives light. There are times, though, when a vision of the heart and a word from the Lord’s mouth run together. So he does not condemn the vision of the heart simply as such, but only when the other is missing. They do run together in the one who says, “I pray with the mouth, and I pray also with the mind.”

FRAGMENT 16

He prophesies about a shaking and about the Lord’s wrath going out against the ungodly. “The anger has not turned back.” He does not say this simply, but adds “until it has done it,” as if the anger will turn back when it has done it. What “the word of the Lord” has not yet done, the Lord’s anger does. What the Lord’s anger does, David tells us when he says, “Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger.” So the anger does not stop rebuking until it has accomplished the thing for which it rebukes. In the same way the wrath does not stop until it has fully disciplined. And it will not only do it, but also establish it and make it firm. As for “the purpose of his heart,” which is a riddle, he says it will be understood at the end. That is, it will be understood concerning what has been said about anger and wrath. So thanks be to the One who has revealed to us what until now had been hidden.

FRAGMENT 17

"Therefore those who pushed my people toward evil did not escape my notice." The one who lets even a prophet know what happens everywhere knows it much better himself. "The Spirit of the Lord has filled the world," and "in him we live and move and are," as Paul told the Athenians. The same sense is in "Do I not fill heaven and earth, says the Lord?" By his power he draws near to all things. So our prayers are not offered as to a God who is far away. It is also said of the Son, "He was in the world, and the world came to be through him." He is the one who says, "I am a God who draws near." For he said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I too am in the midst of them." He is also the one who says, "Behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age."

FRAGMENT 18

Our soul leaves no part of the body empty. Where there is sensation, there the soul is, and it reaches the whole body. In the same way nothing is empty of God. Yet although he fills all things, he does not fill the sinner. The sinner has been filled with unclean spirits, and it is impossible for such a person to be filled by God unless he is first set free from the others who fill him. God fills the worthy, in heaven and on earth. Notice that it does not say, "The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord," but "the earth and its fullness." This implies that there are some in the earth who are not the fullness of the earth. The fullness of the earth is those who have been filled by the one who said, "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord."

FRAGMENT 19

The false prophets also made a habit of saying "Thus says the Lord," acting the part of the true prophets. So there had to be signs that distinguished the two groups. Now there was, as the apostle says, the gift of discerning spirits. The one who had it distinguished spirits, divine and evil, as a money-changer tells good coin from counterfeit. But even without that general knowledge, what is said here is enough for discernment. For he says, "My word" is not empty, [nor] food for irrational creatures. It is like wheat, food for rational beings.

FRAGMENT 20

Why did he say "what has the chaff to do with the wheat" and not "with barley"? Because the Lord set out loaves, barley ones for the less rational and

wheat ones for the rational. So here too he did not say, “What has the chaff to do with barley?” but “with wheat.” He is showing precisely that this is food for the rational. There is another sign: the words of the Lord are like an axe that cuts rock. When the hearer is reprovéd and burns, so that he says, “Was not my heart burning within me?”, the word is fire and wheat. But if he enjoys listening to things that suit his pleasure, it is chaff. The word of God is also an axe. It can split not only wood but even rock. This is not the rock [that is, the Word] understood as Christ, but the opposite kind, the one that must be cut, as in “Rocks will be shattered before the Lord.”

FRAGMENT 21

Suppose someone buys a garment from the person he should buy it from. He holds it lawfully. A thief also holds a garment, but not justly. In the same way, among those who teach from Scripture, the ones who bring the words with a spurious and [counterfeit] soul are stealing. Of them it could be said, “All who came before me are thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them.” Such is the person who uses the gospel word but is not disposed toward it in faith and does not live by it. He puts the message of the word to use for some purpose foreign to it. He is a thief, and it will be said to him, “You who preach not to steal, do you steal?”

FRAGMENT 22

22a Jeremiah 24:1–3. What the whole world is, in a certain proportion, the human being is by himself. For you will find one person called heaven, when he bears “the image of the heavenly.” Another is called earth, if he has “the image of the earthly” (for to the one who sinned it was said, “You are earth”). Another has rivers in him “leaping up to eternal life,” if he has the most drinkable words. [The text seems defective here: “whom God formed to play with him.”] And in particular you will find one called sun, another moon, and others stars, since “so also is the resurrection of the dead.” And after a little: But here the parable says that he is a very bad fig. Virtue sweetens a person through ripening, so that the whole soul, spirit and body become sweet, because the quality that comes from the virtues has been put into him. Wickedness, on the other hand, makes him bad and inedible. But if someone looks for figs that are not very good, he looks for them outside the mysteries of godliness and the temple of God, just as he does for those that are not very bad. For if he comes to the discipleship itself, then before the

face of the temple of the Lord there are figs that are either very good (the kind Christ knows how to make) or bad. [For not even the bad fig outside cast the words of God behind it; this clause is uncertain.]

22b So around the temple of God and the divine teachings two baskets are set. The one who does the choosing knows how to place each fig. He will not allow the quality of a bad fig to be mixed in with the very good ones (“a little leaven leavens the whole lump”), nor the reverse. And perhaps the basket of bad figs is the Gehenna of the eternal fire, and the basket of good ones is the kingdom of the heavens. And after a little: But when did the prophet see the baskets? After the captivity, he says. For if you look at the coming of the Savior, and at the captivity of the people, and at us, who were strangers by nature and are now outside Jerusalem but through faith in God and the sweetness of the truth are becoming good figs, you will see the basket of good figs. But if you look at those of the circumcision after this captivity, you will see the basket of bad and inedible figs. It is not enough for the figs to be very good. They should also be like early figs, for a late fig is not what the one being saved is compared to.

FRAGMENT 23

Jeremiah 24:6. Christ is builder and architect. Of him it is said among the prophets: “This one will build my city, and he will turn back the captivity of my people.” So the Lord says: “I will build them, and I will not tear them down.” Though God is good, he does tear down some buildings. For the building of unclean spirits in us must be demolished, and only then can a temple be built for God out of virtues and right teachings, so that his glory may be seen in it. He is also a farmer, planting and grafting in those who are worthy. For the Savior, who as the root holds up all the branches, says: “I am the true vine, and you are the branches, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that remains and bears good fruit, my Father cleans, so that it may bear more fruit. But every branch in me that remains and does not bear fruit, my Father cuts out and throws into the fire.” The one who remains in him and does not bear fruit is found not among the Gentiles but among believers. He is the sort of person who says he is a believer yet does wrong without fear. Such a person is rightly cut out. But the Father cleans the branch that bears fruit, so that if it overlooks anything, as a human being will, it may be set right.

FRAGMENT 24

Jeremiah 25:14. As we were saying, the Seventy placed this one first among the visions against the nations, but the others [that is, the other translators] have the opposite order. Elam is an Arabian nation lying near the Red Sea.

FRAGMENT 25

^{25a} They prided themselves on their archery and had never learned to sing, “For I will not hope in my bow, and my sword will not save me.” He threatens to stir up nations against him from every side, and so he calls winds from the places where those nations set out. Each of us, according to his condition, is by name an Elamite, or an Edomite, or a Moabite, or an Egyptian, or an Israelite. It is possible to change from one nation to another, for the better or for the worse, since the nations of the soul know how to fall into one another. In any case, each of us, in proportion to what he has stored up, will drink the cup of the Lord’s wrath, either unmixed or mixed. For we have all sinned, some more and some less. Israel took his name from what he did, because he prevailed with God in the wrestling. In the same way there are some who are “Compared,” “Blameworthy” Elamites, for that is how the name is interpreted. [He who sets his mind alongside passions of dishonor (the Greek here is corrupt).] Paul also makes clear who the winds in question are, when he says: “So that we may no longer be tossed about and carried around by every wind of teaching, in the dice-play of men, toward the scheming of error.” The one who is “Compared” is carried around by every wind, whether of teaching, or of anger, or of desire.

^{25b} There are four general winds that disturb the soul of a human being: desire, fear, pleasure and grief. The Elamite, once God has abandoned him, is handed over to these. But what is the Elamite’s bow, in which the beginning of their power lies? David himself said, as he sang: “Look, the sinners have bent a bow, they have made ready arrows in the quiver, to shoot in the dark of the moon at those who are upright in heart.” And a little later: But the Savior, when he came to live among us, brought the four winds against the Elamites who surround us, in order to scatter them. For opposing powers are handed over to other opposing powers for punishment, as Pharaoh was handed over to Nebuchadnezzar. If you shut up venomous snakes together, the weaker are eaten by the stronger because of hunger. Finally the strongest of all, filled with the snakes it has devoured, becomes what is called the ba-

silisk, which has venom that by its look alone withers a fruit-bearing tree. In the same way the wicked powers are punished by one another, until at last there is left “the last enemy of Christ, death,” the basilisk of which Scripture says, “You will tread on the asp and the basilisk.” For Christ, being stronger than the basilisk, has trodden on it, and has given us “authority to tread on snakes and scorpions.”

FRAGMENT 26

There is a Babylonian man and a Babylonian infant, and we must struggle against both. That is, we must struggle against passions that are already great and against those that are only now beginning. “Blessed is the one who seizes the infants of Babylon and dashes them against the rock” (that is, Christ), before they grow into men. It is more blessed still to destroy the Babylonian seed, meaning a confusing thought. (Opposite to this is the seed of which it is said, “Blessed is he who has seed in Zion,” and “Blessed are those who sow upon every water, where the ox and the donkey tread.”) We must destroy not only a grown man or a child, but even the bare seed, for it can bear fruit if it is cultivated. And what is the water on which the good seed must be sown? It is the washing of regeneration. There “the ox and the donkey tread.” The ox is the clean one, the Israelite. The donkey is the one who is unclean by birth, the Gentile. These animals are symbols of the word announced to the Israelites and of the word proclaimed to the nations.

FRAGMENT 27

The Babylonian holds a sickle, not to save but [to cut off and to reap the holy church] (the Greek here is corrupt). Before the church suffers this, let us destroy him by wiping out the arguments of the heretics. Such was Paul, who said, “Having in readiness to punish every disobedience,” and “tearing down every height that is raised up against the knowledge of God.” Then he bears witness to the power of Greek reasoning, saying that all the nations give way to it, since it seems in some sense to be demonstrative.

FRAGMENT 28

^{28a}Jeremiah 27:17. He says, “a sheep,” as if speaking of one that has gone astray. In the Gospel he also says, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” In the parable too, only one out of the hundred was lost. The shepherd who came to visit us came to find that one. He lifted it onto his shoulders and restored it to the number of the ninety-nine. For we are all

one body and one sheep. One is a foot, another a head, another some other part. The shepherd came and gathered “bone to bone and joint to joint,” and having united them, he took them up into his own place. This unity comes about through love, truth and a good choice of the will. By his own word, then, he united everyone. But if some were found disobedient, they brought on themselves an incurable condition. So every Israelite is one, according to true kinship, “for we are all one body and one bread, and we share in one Spirit.” A straying sheep is one who fails to catch what is fitting, in word and in deed, either by not seeking it or by not finding it.

^{28b} But the one who knows and does what belongs to true knowledge does not go astray. The one who goes astray is driven out by lions. For “our adversary the devil prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Already “young lions roaring to seize, and seeking their food from God” are plotting against the righteous. They want to drive us out from the borders of peace. But as David seized the lion by its beard and strangled it, so let us ask the spiritual David, Christ, to seize the lion and destroy the whole gathering of beasts. Now he takes two lions that stand for whole kinds, the Assyrian and the Babylonian. According to the history in the fourth book of Kingdoms, there are two. The Assyrian carried the sons of Israel away “to the Assyrians, until this day,” and the Babylonian carried the sons of Judah “to Babylon.” But the text does not say “first and second” here; it says “first and last.” For the first lion is the opposing devil, “the murderer” himself. The last, at the end of the age, is “the man of sin, the son of destruction, who exalts himself above everything called god or object of worship.”

FRAGMENT 29

Jeremiah 27:17–19. Israel cannot be restored to its pasture unless the two kings suffer what they must suffer, as vengeance for those who suffered evil. Do not take this word as referring only to the devil or the antichrist. For let it be destroyed in me: “Satan crushed under my feet quickly.” When he has destroyed these two, and those between them, he will restore Israel to its pasture. Then he will also graze on Carmel and Bashan, on Mount Ephraim and in Gilead. Though there were so many places in Judea and in the [land] that was to be inherited, he named only these.

FRAGMENT 30

He calls Babylon a hammer, because by its own greed it wore down those on the earth. When Solomon was building the divine temple, the third book of Kingdoms says in praise of it that “a hammer and an axe were not heard in the house of God.” The house is the church of God, in which no hammer ought to be heard. The devil is the hammer of the whole earth. The person who pays no attention to him is like a piece of material that is struck by the hammer but does not suffer. For it says, “Behold, a man standing on an adamant wall, and in his hand an adamant.” No hammer can crush an adamant. So even if the devil stands over him as the hammer, and the dragon lies beneath him “like an unhammered anvil,” the adamant in the Lord’s hand and under his shelter will suffer nothing. For the holy person is an adamant wall. Remaining in the Lord’s hands, he is unharmed, even if he is caught between the hammer and the dragon. The more he is struck, the more brilliantly he shows his virtue. The devil is like someone who does not know the nature of [stones], and so he tests with many blows the one who is like adamant. God alone knows well the nature of such people. If there were no hammer, there would be no “beaten trumpet” of the law, rousing the hearers to the feasts of God or stirring them up for war. The hammer made Paul such a man through various trials. He suffered nothing from it, yet with a great voice he roused people to the war against evil. So the hammer produces the temptation, and the one who serves the hammer is the descendant of Cain, “the hammer-striker, the smith of bronze and iron.” In the time of the Savior, Judas was such a man, and so were those who shouted, “Crucify, crucify him.” By such acts they served the hammer.

FRAGMENT 31

The apostle also knows of “vessels of wrath,” “prepared for destruction, in order that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy.” He divided all people into these two kinds of vessels, those of wrath and those of mercy. The first kind are like Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the second like Paul and those who believed. But what is the Lord’s treasury, in which the vessels of wrath are kept? Perhaps it is the church, in which such people often go unnoticed. But there will be a time when he opens the church. For now it is shut, and the vessels of wrath feed together with the vessels of mercy. The chaff is there with the wheat, and in one net are both

the rejected fish and the chosen ones. The Lord opens his treasury at the time of judgment. When the vessels of wrath are cast out, the one who is a vessel of mercy may fittingly say, "They went out from us, for they were not of us." But vessels that sin outside the treasury are not yet vessels of wrath. They are lesser ones. For they are "servants who do not know the will of their lord and do not do it." So they are simply vessels kept for other purposes.

FRAGMENT 32

He says that some of the captives of Judea will come, bringing the good news of vengeance on Babylon. He could also be speaking of those who turn back from idolatry, which he calls Babylon. They come to Zion, the Watchtower, which is the church, and announce the vengeance that comes from the Lord our God.

FRAGMENT 33

Those in Babylon are many, and those in Jerusalem are very few. For it has been said, "The Lord your God did not love you because you are the most numerous, for you are the fewest of all the nations." Truly "few are those who are saved and who enter through the narrow door." Everyone who bends a bow is commanded to aim it at Babylon, which is "broad and spacious," and to keep none of it for himself.

FRAGMENT 34

However many thoughts a person has that stand against godliness, that is how many Babylonians he has. They must be destroyed, since they are sinners of the earth. The one who has been cleansed of them becomes, in the city, one who belongs to God, who avenges the insolence of Babylon. For Babylon supposed that it had conquered by its own power, and it boasted against God. When the temple was burned, the sacred vessels were given to the concubines for their use. Therefore God consumed the fruitless nation with fire, like a thicket. For this reason he says, "Behold, I am against you, you insolent one, says the Lord of hosts."

FRAGMENT 35

Jeremiah prophesies that the end will come all at once. "For as in the days of the flood" and "in the days of Lot" everyone went about the business of ordinary life, "until the flood came, and the fire, and took everyone away," so the end will come suddenly. Jericho was a symbol of this, for it fell all at once at a voice and the sound of trumpets alone. Babylon too fell suddenly at the

time of the saving passion, when Christ abolished the teachings about the idols of the nations and rescued those from the nations who believed.

FRAGMENT 36

Nebuchadnezzar's cup is gold, "for the deception of men," so that they take it and drink, looking at the gold and not considering the judgment in it. His wretched teachings are decked out with fine language. They lure people by the beauty of their style and by skilled technique. Every poet who thinks himself supreme has likewise made a golden cup, and put into it the poison of idolatry, of shameful speech, and of every evil of the soul. But Jesus did not provide a golden cup, lest he seem to be like that one. (This is why "we have this treasure in earthen vessels.") He provided instead for the salvation that is in him. But the golden cup, Babylon, when it comes to carry out vengeance, comes into the Lord's hand, the hand that once touched Job. It makes the whole earth drunk with anger, grief, passions [or loves] and vainglory. (As many as there are sins, so many are the kinds of drunkenness.) Everything is shaken as if by wine, and nothing stands firm. But the righteous person is not earth. Though he is on earth, he has "his citizenship in heaven." He would not hear, "You are earth, and to earth you will go." Rather, in keeping with what is fitting, he hears, "You are heaven, and to the heavens you will go," for you bear "the image of the heavenly," and you stand firm.

FRAGMENT 37

If Babylon has not been given up on (for he would not have said, "perhaps she will be healed"), what other soul shall we despair of? If she has not been saved, that has come about through her own fault. So the best physicians defend themselves and say, "We tried to heal Babylon, and she was not healed. Let us leave her." The failure to heal her is not due to them, nor to the physicians [text uncertain], nor to the balm [or resin]. The physicians are angels. They serve under the great physician, God, and are willing to heal those who are obedient. If not, they will say, "Let us leave her, and let each of us go to his own place and his own work, because her judgment has reached up to heaven." They condemn her as incurable, one who will suffer the consequences of being given up on. Physicians of the body also leave the incurable, so that they do not die in their hands; and this is what the angels do. The more we sin, the more our judgment grows, and it is lifted up as far as the stars, that is, the holy ones. Then God brings out his judgment to

humble the judgment that sin has raised high. He humbles the sin and gives back what is deserved.

FRAGMENT 38

Isaiah also prophesied: "On a level mountain raise a signal, lift up your voice to them; beckon with the hand." The prophets were giving these orders to the Persians and Medes, who were about to take Babylon. They were to hold up the signal of war over her walls, as over a city about to be captured. By this signal they let the soldiers know the moment of attack. He also commands them to keep their weapons ready; the bows, he says, are for the Medes.

FRAGMENT 39

Paul agrees with the saying "every man has been made foolish [away] from knowledge" when he says, "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The time of visitation is above all the tearing down of idolatry by the coming of Christ. The vessels of war that the Babylonian scattered are the men of Israel and Judah who were experienced in wars. In return for this, he threatens to show no pity to anyone.

FRAGMENT 40

Jer. 28:21–24. The riders of horses are the demons who sit on top of fleshly pleasures. Long ago, too, "horse and rider he threw into the sea" of Egypt. These demons harness various passions in us, set against the four virtues, and so build chariots. The man who is hot-tempered and strong toward evil is "man." The man who is slack toward pleasures is "woman." The "old man" is the one "worn out in evil days." The "young men" are those of whom Isaiah says, "The young will hunger, the youths will grow weary, and the chosen will be powerless." And on the other side he says, "Those who wait on God will renew their strength, they will grow wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary." Here, though, he speaks of the "chosen" in a bad sense, as in the phrase "and his food is choice." People who are chosen in the way of virtue are swallowed up by Nebuchadnezzar. He has virgins too: some are Vestals, some are Pythian priestesses, and some are of other kinds. A soul that has not received the divine seed is also a virgin to him. He has shepherds as well, who train their followers in evil teaching. He has farmers, who sow "the weeds" and cultivate "thorns and thistles," meaning the worldly cares among people. He also has leaders and rulers in evil, and above all "those against whom our struggle is, the principalities and the authorities." To all

these, then, God gives their due, in the presence of those who have just said, “Come, and let us declare in Zion the great deeds of God.”

FRAGMENT 41

Jer. 28:25, 26. He calls Babylon a mountain because of the height of its kingdom. It was a corrupted mountain, corrupted by idolatry and unjust deeds, by which it corrupted others. The city was also set on a height because of the river beside it. Steps led up from the river to the city, which was in two parts, lying along both banks of the river, and in addition the city’s walls were very high. The “hand” is the power that punishes. It brings the city down from its own security and [defense], as if from rocks. It also makes its stones useless by fire, so that no stone is left fit for a sturdier building. In a higher sense the devil too is called a mountain, as in Zechariah: “Who are you, the great mountain before Zerubbabel?” And about the man who had a deaf and mute demon the Savior said, “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move,’ and it will move.” So the devil is the mountain. He is corrupted by his own wickedness, and he corrupts all who set their minds on earthly things.

FRAGMENT 42

Jer. 28:27. “Sanctify the nations” means “set them apart.” For sanctification is service to God, even if that service is one of punishment and the person set apart for it is profane. Such was Cyrus, to whom he says through Isaiah, “But you did not know me.” He called some of those who campaigned against Babylon “nations,” and among them he calls the Armenians “Ararat.”

FRAGMENT 43

Jer. 28:29. The earth was shaken. In earlier times the people on it had been firmly settled and secure in their powers and kingdoms, but now they underwent a bad and painful change, into desolation. Likewise every mind that has held a Babylonian land is shaken out of its attachment to such impiety and confusion. It throws off that disposition so that it may take up a spiritual and heavenly state.

FRAGMENT 44

Jer. 28:30–33. For it was God who did this. He is the one who also said to Cyrus through Isaiah, “I will go before you and level the mountains; I will shatter doors of bronze and break bars of iron in pieces.” Among writers outside the faith, too, it is recorded that Babylon had gates like these. It is

also recorded that the city was taken by way of the descents into the river that ran through the middle. Each part of the city was joined by bridges at the ascents leading up into it, since the city was divided into two parts. The history also says that when the people at the far edges of the city were being captured, the others, because of the city's size, did not notice, as they were holding a festival. In the meantime, as one would expect, some ran to carry the news and others came back from there, and the city was full of uproar. Now he seems to call the houses "groupings," for they stood joined to one another in unbroken rows. Therefore he adds: "The houses of the king of Babylon," and so on. That is to say, the strongholds [were formed] from what was built together in them.

FRAGMENT 45

Where the text reads "they will tilt him and crush his vessels," Symmachus said: "they will strain him and empty his vessels." He kept to the figure of wine, to show that Moab will be emptied of good things. So prosperity is not good for boasters. It was not good for the rich man in Hades either, and it was the reason he was punished. The "mixtures" are spoken of as if they were wine, but Aquila gave "horns." The horn was an ancient kind of cup, for people used to drink from horns, and that is why the word "to mix" stayed in use. The vessels, then, are the cities, and what is inside them is the people and their wealth. The enemies led off the one and burned the other. The disaster puts to shame the hopes people place in demons, but "hope" in God "does not put to shame." Jeroboam set up the calves in Bethel, in Samaria. The man who claims to be strong is not saved, for "a king is not saved by great power." The "day of Moab" is the time of punishment, and the "evil" is the painful things that will overtake him. The text calls on everyone around him to trample on him. That is the meaning of "move him," plainly to bring him shame and grief, for "God opposes the proud."

FRAGMENT 46

"Epicheirion" means either the scepter, or those under the ruler's authority, or hired workers, since "epicheira" means wages.

FRAGMENT 47

"He will clap with his hands." These are the hands with which Moab clapped, rejoicing over Israel and acting boldly against God. Those "who trusted in the fortresses" of their cities gave them up and lived in rocks beside the rav-

ines. They imitated doves in their licentiousness and their folly, for doves sometimes nest in places where anyone who wants can easily take their young. A person is licentious and foolish when he is [initiated] into Beelphegor and clings to useless and empty idols, and Moab was like that. For “the fool said in his heart, There is no God.” Such a person is either wholly godless, or he reckons that the God who truly is does not exist at all.

FRAGMENT 48

As has often been said, Jerusalem is taken to mean the church. It is the city of God, built of living stones. When someone sins, he is thrown out of it and handed over to Nebuchadnezzar, that is, to Satan. Paul says about the man who had committed fornication, “to hand such a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.” And in the first letter to Timothy, about blasphemers: “whom I handed over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.” Let the person cast out of Jerusalem know this: unless he spends enough time outside the church doing what he ought, he will not come back to Jerusalem. A man who sins is cast out even if no human being throws him out. But once he is outside, he must not neglect building a house and planting gardens. If he does not do these things, and does not complete the symbolic number “of the seventy years,” which stands for sabbath and rest, he will not return to share in the church. He stays condemned outside. [The text is corrupt here.] It is as the one who spoke about wisdom said: “I sought to take her as a bride for myself, and I became a lover of her beauty.” We must love her, as Solomon urged in Proverbs when he said, “Love her, and she will keep you,” and “fence her about, and she will lift you high.” Understand also that the other women beside wisdom are the remaining virtues. In this way it will be possible to take many wives, and to father children by them. From wisdom you beget a word of wisdom, so that you may build up others as well. From self-control you beget works of self-control, so that you make others self-controlled in life and in speech. From righteousness you beget works of righteousness in fellowship and in dealings with others. Even in teaching the righteous you will beget children from righteousness. And once you have made sons, you will beget daughters from the sons. The sons are divine thoughts and doctrines, and the daughters are actions.

FRAGMENT 49

When Jerusalem was thrown into turmoil with the Babylonian pressing in on her, people naturally ran to foreknowledge, since they wanted to know what was coming. The false prophets insisted that they were foretelling by the Holy Spirit. Of the others, some brought forward divinations and others dreams. For this reason we must in general refuse every ungodly kind of foreknowledge. If the stars happen to be at work, we pray in vain. So Scripture says, "Let the astrologers of heaven say what the Lord plans for you," and "There will be no omen-reading in Jacob, nor divination in Israel." Therefore make yourself worthy of divine foreknowledge. For after "there will be no divination in Israel," Scripture adds: "At the proper time it will be told to Jacob and to Israel what God will accomplish."

FRAGMENT 50

Every presbyter who acts in this way will suffer such things at the hands of the king of Babylon. If the one who takes part in the Eucharist unworthily will receive judgment on himself, how much more will the one who sits in the presbytery with a defiled conscience and pollutes the council of Christ? For what devout man sitting beside him will dare to say, "I did not sit with the council of vanity," and the words that follow?

FRAGMENT 51

You could say that he is also showing his own goodness, and that this is why he brings severity on those who need it. So after the painful healing, he says, the city will be built up on its height. What height? "A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden." Such a city thinks nothing lowly or merely human. By that I mean pleasures, wealth on earth, and petty glories. For "it was raised together with Christ and seeks the things above." If you do these things, "your city will be built up on its height."

FRAGMENT 52

^{52a} He speaks as of something rare. It is the custom of Scripture to speak kindly after bitter words. From Origen's letter to Africanus, on Susanna: "I remember meeting a Hebrew who loved learning and was counted a wise man among them, and talking with him on many subjects. From him I learned, since the story of Susanna is not rejected, that the names of the elders are also found in Jeremiah, in this form: 'May the Lord make you as he made Zedekiah and as Achiab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in fire,

because of the lawlessness they committed in Jerusalem.” And a little later: “I know of another Hebrew who passes on such traditions about these elders. Those in the captivity were hoping to be freed from slavery to the enemy through the [coming] of Christ. These elders pretended to be able to make clear the things concerning Christ. They claimed in secret that God had granted to one of them to sow the Christ.”

^{52b} Then the woman, deceived by the hope of bearing the Christ, gave herself to the deceiver. In this way the elders Achiab and Zedekiah “committed adultery with the wives of their fellow citizens.” So Daniel rightly says of one that he was “worn out with evil days,” while the other heard, “This is how you used to treat the daughters of Israel,” and what follows. These, then, are the two elders who bore false witness against Susanna. There is consolation, and then after the kind words something harsher again, so that people do not despise “the riches of his kindness” and store up for themselves “wrath on the day of wrath.” So he says: “If wrath comes, it will not depart until it has done what God wills.” God wills, and wrath comes, so that what God wills may be done. For if someone does not want to be within the will of the word of God, wrath is let loose against him. So let us not need a disciplining wrath or anger.

FRAGMENT 53

For they will not go through a desert, as before, but by the lawful road through inhabited land. And figuratively it is said in the way of comfort: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

FRAGMENT 54

“Islands far off” means those tossed by the waves of life, which are far from the truth until they come to salvation. God redeemed Jacob. For “the yoke lying on them has been taken away, and the rod on their neck,” as Isaiah says. This also shows that he himself rescued us from the devil’s power. For what could we have done against the one who said, among other things, “I will take the whole inhabited world in my hand like a nest”? Against him, through Christ, we say: “Where, death, is your victory? Where, Hades, is your sting?”

FRAGMENT 55

To those who weep and are worthy of blessing, let it be said, "Let your voice rest from weeping." They are the ones who say in the Holy Spirit: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion."

FRAGMENT 56

It is also written in Baruch: "Why are you in the land of your enemies? You have been defiled with the dead." When righteous people set foot on a land, it is a land of saints. When many sinners are in it, it is a land of enemies. "In this way," he says, "they will return, so that it will be a settled thing for your children to return from the land of enemies." These are the children who have been helped by you, and who are your fruits. It is also written in Exodus that "God heard the people, their groaning under the works." That is like what is set down here, except that it is not about everyone, but about Ephraim lamenting. Ephraim is interpreted "Fruitfulness."

FRAGMENT 57

God hears the voice of weeping from those who repent. But why did he say that Ephraim was lamenting over sins? The third book of Kingdoms shows it. Rehoboam ruled them harshly, and they should have endured and not revolted. Instead they cried out, "We have no portion in David." Then Jeroboam led the rebels. He belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and he made calves and drew the ten tribes away from the worship of God. For these things they naturally lamented in repentance. Disciplined by their capture, they cried out: "You disciplined me, Lord, and I was disciplined." Like a calf that has bolted from the herd, I left your pasture, and now I need your help. If you do not strengthen me, I am too weak to turn back. I ought to have repented before I was captured, and obeyed your prophets. Instead I repented only after the capture. But now that he knows, he groans. For how could anyone groan who did not know he was sinning, having done things worthy of shame in his sins, and above all in his licentiousness? "I have repented so greatly that I point you out to others [?]." Ephraim's repentance is so great that God takes up the very words of his confession from his mouth, and Ephraim hears the voice saying: "From your youth you have been a beloved son, Ephraim."

FRAGMENT 58

A certain Nebuchadnezzar the Assyrian held all people, until Christ ransomed us. That is why Matthew, drawing on Isaiah, says: "to proclaim re-

lease to captives.” For he did not proclaim it to captives in the literal, historical sense. He himself is also the righteous and holy mountain, for how could the title fit a lifeless thing? If we are in him, as in “and you in me,” let us build on the righteous mountain. A person does this by coming to Judea, which is interpreted “Confessing.” He confesses his sins to God and gives thanks. For it says, “Be the first to state your lawless deeds, so that you may be justified.” There are certain cities of God, and buildings and fields of his. Paul also says: “You are God’s field, God’s building.” In whoever the mysteries of God and his unspeakable teachings are being built up, in that person there is a temple of God and the holy of holies. That person is the mother-city of all Judea.

FRAGMENT 59

“I will not reject Israel” seems to contradict the one who says to them, “and the race of Israel will cease.” Perhaps the one statement was made about the fleshly Israel. As for the word “reject,” it is not found in the other translators, but only in the Seventy. You may also understand it this way: now I reject, but if he is lifted up, I will not reject.

FRAGMENT 60

We are all in prison, and especially those who are being tempted. Then a person acquires a field, but without having left the prison. The acquisition comes by God’s will to those who contend well. Now Hilkiah’s [relatives] are brothers [?]. For the business of brothers is peace and a portion. The fruit of God’s portion is “God’s Lifting-up,” for that is how Jeremiah is interpreted. The fruit of peace is “Grace of God,” for that is what Anameel means. So the grace of God, being the offspring of peace, brings to the prophet in prison his own field, according to God’s command.

FRAGMENT 61

This man makes a deed of purchase. Perhaps this stands for the understandings, the memories and the teachings by which we have acquired the field, that is, the labors of the way of life. For the one who is going to practice righteousness must first know about righteousness, and the same can be said of the other virtues. God takes care that the book is put into a jar so that it will last longer. For “we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” These vessels may be our own jars, or the plainness of the wording of Scripture. So “the ruler of this world” was deceived. He despised the word of godliness because

it was not in golden vessels adorned with fine diction and persuasive phrasing, and for that reason it remained many days. For the one who holds the deed of purchase says, "My word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of Spirit and power." When Jeremiah had done what he was commanded, he gave thanks to God. Notice the prophet's obedience, which came before any visible advantage. Then he adds a prophecy of the land's recovery. For prophecy given through deeds makes what is heard visible, and makes the future as if it were present, showing the whole in the part.

FRAGMENT 62

It is not believable that the prophet would give such great thanks for a field bought for "ten and seven shekels," when he was "sanctified from the womb" and full of the divine Spirit. But look at the sabbath number, the symbol of rest, and at ten, which is perfect and belongs to God. (For tithes are offered on the tenth day of the atonements, and the first lawgiving was the Decalogue.) Then you will know what "the field" is: it is full of fruits fitting for saints. Such was the field of Jacob, which Isaac smelled. "Behold," he says, "the smell of my son is like the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed." Such is the person who "has the fruits of the Spirit," so that he may "sow to the Spirit and reap eternal life." For he breathed out patience, kindness, [the text is broken here], and gives thanks, saying, "O Lord, you who are." For he looks to the one who truly is, "not looking at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen."

FRAGMENT 63

Jeremiah wrote down not only prophecies but also his own sufferings. By the one he taught some the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and by the other he taught others examples of endurance, while the false prophets suffered nothing of the kind because of their flattery. So let us be ready, in a time of persecution, to be ranked with Jeremiah and with the apostle who said, "in prisons often." The statement that the king was not able to oppose them shows that his own intention toward Jeremiah was rather kindly. A righteous king must not be carried along with the wicked men around him. Often, too, it is useful to have the protection of the powerful, through which God often does good.

FRAGMENT 64

“I am afraid,” he says, “that I will become a laughingstock to the deserters; for this is what I take into account and worry about.” Jerusalem is handed over because of sin, and the church is too. If someone governs it like Hezekiah, it is saved. If he governs it like Zedekiah, then by being separated from it he saves it, but by staying he destroys it. So if someone who is defiling the church goes out, he saves both the church and his own soul. But if, like Zedekiah, he hesitates about going out, then “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

FRAGMENT 65

Jeremiah tells him what the women being led into exile will say: “Those who spoke peaceably to you have deceived you, saying that they would not hand you over to the Babylonian.” [They will join in the charge, or: they will be named,] as those who were the cause of the fall. For you will certainly be captured. Perhaps he is also blaming the false prophets, who promised peace in words. But the prophet, out of kindness and concern for the king, hid the truth from the rulers. His silence now did no harm to it, since he had already read the words publicly.

FRAGMENT 66

The prophet was given a choice of where he wished to live. He passes over Babylon and chooses Judea. He is fleeing the honor offered by the king, and he chooses Judea for the sake of the poor who stayed behind to farm. In this way he could look after the land for the sake of the poor, and by his prophecies cultivate their souls. For the prophets divided the work between them: this one took Judea, and Daniel and the three young men took Babylon.

FRAGMENT 67

A good man does not suspect anyone of being so wicked as to murder even those who have done no wrong. Why God allowed Gedaliah to be killed would be a matter for another discussion, and belongs among the unsearchable judgments of God.

FRAGMENT 68

^{68a} Connect the “not” about the incense with “the Lord remembered.” It is clear that he is speaking of those who burn incense to idols, since the statements before this follow once they had confessed it. But let us ask whether

someone who burns incense to God in the wrong way also becomes responsible for the land becoming impassable. Suppose you offer physical incense, as the Jews do. If you have virtue, you offer it well, because the fragrance within matches the fragrance outside. But if you offer it with wickedness, you taint the outward fragrance, so to speak, and turn it into a stench. Then it could not be said, “The Lord smelled a fragrant aroma,” but the opposite. As for the “aroma of fragrance” with God, it is not said of the clean animals Noah offered. It is said of his righteousness and perfection, which he himself had in his generation. For God does not delight in blood and the smoke of fat, as demons do. Let us rather, “raised together with Christ, seek the things above,” keeping in mind the words “Let my prayer be as incense before you.” For John says in Revelation, “The prayers of the saints are incense.”

^{68b} But if we defile prayer with wicked thoughts, then what happens is “Let their prayer become sin.” If instead we pray out of righteousness, the opposite happens. For when people say because of their sin, “My wounds stank and festered because of my folly,” their incense becomes foul-smelling. For this reason Isaiah said, “If you bring fine flour, it is vain; incense is an abomination to me.” The apostle taught how we should pray, saying, “I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger and disputing.” When Moses’ hands were lifted up like that, Israel prevailed; when they were lowered, Amalek prevailed. Whoever prays this way does not fail, for the saying is true: “While you are still speaking, he will say, ‘Look, I am here.’” So the Lord, he says, could no longer bear the incense of the wicked. We too may put up with some stench, but when it grows worse we flee from it. God likewise has a measure of patience, and he goes after those who do not repent. He did this in Noah’s time, when he could no longer bear the stench of those who were then doing wrong. Therefore he says among the prophets, “I have kept silent; shall I be silent forever?”

FRAGMENT 69

When bodies decay, the surrounding air takes in the decay and is itself corrupted, and it brings plague on those who come near, so that the place becomes impassable. In the same way the sins of souls bring about a plague of souls.

FRAGMENT 70

Baruch suffered with the people and lamented, and he pleaded with God on their behalf. For this reason he receives a promise of help in their troubles, with God saying, in effect, "Those I tear down, I will build up again." For first "he causes pain, and then he restores," and so on. The good things cannot be received unless the evils have first been removed. For God, as the architect of "the true tent, which the Lord pitched, and not man," also pulls down the wretched buildings of unbelievers. Paul speaks of that tent: "You are God's building." And like a farmer he pulls up what bears no fruit, for "every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted." He plants a "fruitful vine." This is not like the one "turned to bitterness and foreign," which he cuts down so that he may make it again "true" and "God's field." In the same way, according to David, he "took down the hedge" of the vine from Egypt, and David prays for it: "Look down from heaven, and visit this vine." So these people too are being disciplined for their benefit: "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves." "For who is it that makes me glad, if not the one who is grieved by me?" "For godly grief produces a repentance without regret that leads to salvation." "For this reason I bring evils upon all flesh": upon those who set their minds on earthly things.

FRAGMENT 71

For God finds the souls of the righteous. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God," but the souls of sinners are reckoned as though they did not even exist.

FRAGMENT 72

72a {Just as all God's gifts are immeasurably greater than our mortal frame, so too the exact account of the wisdom behind all these things lies with God, who also arranged for them to be written. If the Father of the Word is willing, it may be given to the soul that has been thoroughly purified, one that approaches with all earnestness and with a sense of human weakness in grasping wisdom. But suppose someone throws himself in too rashly. He has not considered that God's wisdom is unspeakable, nor the Word who was "in the beginning" and "with God" and himself God, nor that these things must be sought and found in keeping with the Word who is God and with the wisdom that is with him. Such a person must fall into fables, idle talk and invented stories, and put himself in danger of impiety. So we should also

remember the command about such matters that Solomon gives in Ecclesiastes: “Do not hurry to bring out a word before the face of God. For God is in heaven above, and you are on earth below. Therefore let your words be few.”} We ought to believe that no stroke of the holy Scriptures is empty of God’s wisdom. For he who commanded me, a man, “You shall not appear before me empty,” will much more himself say nothing empty.

72b The prophets speak because they have received “from his fullness.” That is why everything of theirs breathes out of fullness. There is nothing in prophecy, law, gospel or apostle that is not from fullness. Because it is from fullness, it breathes of that fullness to those who have eyes that see the things of fullness, ears that hear what comes from fullness, and a sense of smell for the fragrance of what breathes from fullness. And if you ever stumble while reading Scripture over a thought that is really a fine “stone of stumbling and rock of offense,” blame yourself. Do not give up hope that this stone of stumbling and rock of offense holds meanings, so that what was said may come true: “and the one who believes will not be put to shame.” Believe first, and under what seems to be an offense you will find much holy benefit.

722 If you ever stumble while reading Scripture over a thought that is really a fine “stone of stumbling and rock of offense,” blame yourself. Do not give up hope that this stone of stumbling and rock of offense holds meanings, so that what was said may come true: “and the one who believes will not be put to shame.” Believe first, and under what seems to be an offense you will find much holy benefit. For we have received a command not to speak an idle word, since we shall give account for it on the day of judgment. And as far as we are able, we strive to make every word that comes out of our mouth do something, both in us who speak and in those who hear. What then should we understand about the prophets, except that every word spoken through their mouth was effective? It is no wonder if every word spoken by the prophets accomplished the work that fits a word. But I think that every wonderful letter written in the oracles of God also does its work. There is not one “iota or one stroke” written in Scripture that does not do its own work for those who know how to use the power of the letters.

FRAGMENT 73

Think of herbs. Each one has its own power, whether for the health of the body or for some other purpose. But not everyone can know what each herb is good for. Only those who have gained that knowledge, the ones who

spend their time among herbs, know when to gather a plant, where on the body to apply it, and how to prepare it so that it helps the person who uses it. In the same way, the saint is a kind of spiritual herbalist. He gathers from the sacred writings each single iota and each ordinary letter. He finds the power of the letter, what it is useful for, and that nothing written there is superfluous. If you want to hear a second example, consider that each part of our body was made by God the craftsman for some particular work. But not everyone can know the power and use of each part, even down to the most ordinary ones. Those physicians who have worked at anatomy can say, of each part and even the smallest piece, what use providence made it for. So think of the Scriptures in the same way: as all the herbs, or as one complete body of words. If you are not an herbalist of the Scriptures, and not an anatomist of the prophetic words, do not suppose that anything written is superfluous. Blame yourself rather than the sacred writings when you do not find the meaning of what is written. I have said this by way of introduction. It can be useful in a general way for the whole of Scripture. Let it encourage those who want to give attention to their reading never to pass over any letter without examining and searching it.

Fragments on Lamentations

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 240–250

Origen wrote a commentary on Lamentations that is now lost. These are the Greek fragments of it, taken from commentary-chains on the prophets (and, at the end, one fragment from the chain on the first eight books of the Bible).

FRAGMENT 1

Jeremiah, after the people had been taken captive and while he was in Babylon, mourns for the city, the land and the people because of what had happened. He mourns in sections and divisions, which he marks off in order, beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. After he has finished the lament for each letter, and last of all the one beginning with Tau, which is the final Hebrew letter, he returns to Aleph and laments again. He does this four times, going through the twenty-two letters.

FRAGMENT 2

If we see the soul placed under the hand of the devil, or of his angels, or in short of the hostile powers (the soul, which by nature is able to contemplate, to see what is real and to take its stand upon it), then we will somehow understand the captivity and the one who took the captive. But if we take refuge in Christ, who according to the prophet Isaiah proclaimed “release to captives,” we will be set free from the captivity, even if the one who took us captive has gone as far as binding us. For Jesus came “to bring out those who are bound from their chains, and those who sit in darkness from the house of the prison.”

FRAGMENT 3

For this reason the Hebrews say that the books of the old Scripture are equal in number to the letters, so that there is a complete introduction to the knowledge of God, just as the letters are the introduction to all wisdom for

those who are learning. And it is fourfold, perhaps because the elements of bodies are also four. And a little later: The edition of Aquila and Theodotion is not found in the Lamentations; only that of Symmachus and the Septuagint. And again: Someone might ask how, when the title of the book is in the plural, "Lamentations," in the prologue he speaks of this lament in the singular. But the individual laments are many, divided according to the letters, while all of them are brought back to one, since they all refer to a single subject, Israel.

FRAGMENT 4

Weeping that comes from love is called blessed. For it belongs to the holy person "to weep with those who weep."

FRAGMENT 5

As the Lord drew near to Jerusalem he wept and said, "If you too had known the things that make for your peace." "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

FRAGMENT 6

So if "blessed are those who weep, for they will laugh," then Jeremiah, this man of mystery, had to weep this weeping. And in keeping with "blessed are those who mourn," he had to mourn for those who deserved to be mourned.

FRAGMENT 7

As far as the wording goes, the "multitude of the people" seems to mean the Israelites who lived there, and the "multitude of the nations," as we said before, the proselytes. But for the higher meaning: since contemplative matters are closer kin to the soul and less distracting than practical ones, the multitude of the people means the wealth of insights, and the multitude of the nations means the great number of good deeds. And a little later: "She who was full of people sits alone." The bride has cast out the bridegroom, the Word, and so has become like a widow, she who was once full of the nations just mentioned.

FRAGMENT 8

As far as the wording goes, it fits that Jerusalem is spoken of with wonder, because of the change to something more grim: she sits bereft, she who was

once full of people, so that her loneliness is her desolation. She had a husband, the living Word who was her protector, when she followed him while he was present and helping her. Now she is widowed and abandoned because of what has been sinned. And after other things: So much for the literal text. As for the meaning, Jerusalem, prospering and full of people and of nations and ruling over regions, is the divine soul. It is no wonder if the perfect soul is called Jerusalem, not merely a house or a farmstead or a village (which is greater than that) or some ordinary city, but one that surpasses all cities and is honored before God. The greatest city is clothed with a greatness worthy of note, and for her wisdom and every virtue [the text is corrupt here: something like “many times over the buildings”] abound. And a little later: Just as one can see Jerusalem flourishing, filling with people and nations and ruling over regions, so, if virtue can be lost, one can see her at some time left alone, widowed and enslaved, so that she even pays tribute to the enemy who has conquered her. This is according to the soul of the person who has fallen away from the truth.

FRAGMENT 9

Lamentations 1:1. Why speak of how she, who once ruled over regions, is enslaved among her enemies to such a degree that she must always pay tribute, [doing everything the masters command]? And they command nothing good. Perhaps for each sin she commits here she pays some tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, whose name is interpreted “Settling-in” and “knowledge of restraint.” And she pays not to Nebuchadnezzar alone, but also to his satraps.

FRAGMENT 10

Lamentations 1:2. In the first lament, the one beginning with Aleph, we were able to keep to the wording. But what could anyone say about this one, where a city is said to have wept in the night so that her tears are on her cheeks? Perhaps someone will say that the people who are called “the city,” and who also pay tribute, wept when they remembered from what peace and freedom they had fallen into such great slavery and humiliation. How, then, shall we explain “in the night”? Perhaps it means that at the time of rest common to all people, the city, being reminded, wept while they lay at rest. They wept in streams, with tears running down their cheeks. Their weeping grew especially strong and the tears flowed, because not one of so many who

loved her was there to console them. Everyone who was fond of her had rejected the friendship they had with her and turned it into hatred. Who, then, as far as the wording goes, were those who loved her before, and of whom not one was there to console her? Perhaps the other cities of Judea. Perhaps because they loved the mother city, they did not comfort her in her time of distress. And a little later: So much for the literal text. [Now if the word “weep” is taken, as in the earlier passages, of one who has fallen from her own country and come into confusion, then she has a condition opposite to laughing, the laughter that comes from joy and cheerfulness.] Our Lord promises this laughter to those who weep the blessed weeping, saying: “Blessed are those who weep now, for they will laugh.” And in Job it says: “He will fill the mouth of the truthful with laughter.” Perhaps this is also why one of the patriarchs is called Laughter. The apostle, then, who groans, made this clear when he said: “For indeed we who are in the tent groan, being burdened.” Because of the promise of cheerfulness, he weeps a weeping that is most nourishing and that benefits the soul.

FRAGMENT 11

Lamentations 1:2. We think that loving [agapan] is the more divine, and, so to speak, the spiritual kind of love, while being fond [philein] is bodily and more human. Perhaps, since no wicked person loves in the first sense, we should notice that about the better ones it says: “There is no one to console her from all who love her.” About the lesser ones it says: “All who were fond of her rejected her; they became enemies to her.” The lesser ones both rejected her and became her enemies, while the better ones simply did not console her.

FRAGMENT 12

Lamentations 1:3. As for the literal text, the sense would be this. Judea exchanged her own place. The causes of this were her humiliation (she was humbled by sinning, and she abandoned the high and lofty standing she once had when she lived in godliness), and also her heavy slavery, in which she was enslaved by being subjected to the passions. Removed to a new home, she was settled among the nations, where she was unable to find rest. All her enemies pursued her, overtook her and overpowered her, and she came under the power of the nations who oppressed her.

FRAGMENT 13

On the literal level, the sense is this. The law says, "Three times a year every male of yours shall appear before the Lord your God." So after the temple was built in Zion, from the time of Solomon, the people hurried to carry out what was commanded. The cities of Judea lay around Jerusalem, and roads led from every direction to Zion. The prophet says that because of the captivity these roads mourn: they are gloomy and wholly deserted. [The text is damaged here.] In those earlier times there was great joy and gladness on them, as Jews from every quarter hurried to Mount Zion for the feast. There were also many gates built in Zion, facing every region, and the text says that all of them have been destroyed. The priests can no longer carry out their [duties] on other days, either because they have been taken captive or because no one is left to come to them and ask for the priestly services. Moreover, he says, the virgins of Zion are being led away, evidently by the enemies who have conquered them.

FRAGMENT 14

On the deeper sense: Zion is the name for the power of the soul that watches and contemplates. To it lead many roads of varied teachings, whether mystical, natural or moral, and perhaps also logical. These roads lead to the understanding and contemplation of the matters set before us. But suppose someone loses the discipline of practicing these things and falls into confusion. Then all these roads mourn, because no one travels them. They keep festival when they are traveled, examined and, so to speak, crossed from end to end. They mourn when they are deserted, when no one searches them or goes through them, because the travelers have fallen away, have been taken captive by the passions, and have been drawn off to worse things.

FRAGMENT 15

Zion, having nothing sweet at all, lives in bitterness by herself. The words "she is embittered" here should not be taken as a kind of anger.

FRAGMENT 16

The plain sense of the wording is something like this. Before the time of the captivity, some were oppressing the land of Judea, or at least wanted to, but they did not prevail, because God shielded the Jews. That was when the Jews showed themselves worthy of help. But when they sinned, and besides not listening to the prophets the sons of Israel even put them to death, then they

were handed over into the power of their oppressors. So their enemies became “head,” that is, as Symmachus translated it, “rulers.” Others, however, who were enemies alongside the oppressors, either in intention or in actual fact, were prospering, while those who had been abandoned because of their sins fell into the power of the oppressors. The Lord humbled the transgressors because of the multitude of their ungodly acts. He did it so thoroughly that no mercy was left even for their little children, but they went into captivity, driven along by every oppressor.

FRAGMENT 17

And those who had not kept their covenants with him, given in the holy oracles, were handed over to humiliation by the Lord because of the multitude of their ungodly acts. Their enemies took the lead and rejoiced over it.

FRAGMENT 18

We must explain the wording as far as we are able. We ask who the daughter of Zion is, and in what her beauty lies. We ask also what the pasture is that the rulers of the daughter of Zion do not have, like rams without grazing, and how, stripped of strength, they walk before the face of the pursuer. Our understanding is this. Mount Zion is the mother of the assembly in it, and the assembly is called the daughter of Zion. The beauty of the daughter of Zion is the wealth she had in her robes. When the enemies plundered, this wealth “went out” from the things it adorned. That is, it was carried off; “went out” is the stronger way he says it. The leaders of the assembly, with the enemies pressing upon them and taking captives, lacked their usual provisions. They became like rams that find no food. Rams that are driven along without being fed walk feebly, giving way to the force of those chasing them. In the same way the rulers became captives and were led away to the country of their captors. They did not walk in strength before the face of the pursuer.

FRAGMENT 19

Lamentations 1:6. As for the deeper meaning, a soul of this kind is a daughter of Zion. Just as the righteous soul is a daughter of righteousness, and the wise soul a child of wisdom, so, since Zion means “Watchtower,” the soul that keeps watch and passes through things by contemplation could be called a daughter of Zion. What else could I fittingly take to be her beauty and her dignity than the wealth of the holy doctrines of truth, seen with wisdom? So

when someone, after gaining beauty and dignity, neglects to hold these doctrines fast and to increase the divine wealth, what had been her adornment drains away and goes out from her. The rulers are those who led the way in the word and guided her by the hand to the possession of the beauty just described. Like rams that lead the flock of sheep and find no pasture, they too have fallen into want, because they let go of attention to the things that could feed them and, so to speak, fatten the sheep as well. Because of this they grow weak and are overtaken by the pursuer, who is our adversary the devil. They walk before him, driven wherever he wishes to lead them. But if the daughter of Zion just mentioned takes care of her beauty and her splendor, and takes thought to guard her dignity, she despises and mocks the king of the Assyrians, as we have learned from Isaiah, who says: "The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and mocked you."

FRAGMENT 20

Lamentations 1:7. For the one who remembers, in suffering such things, is not remembering the present but the past. And a little later: Having raised these difficulties at this passage, and looking for the reminder of her past humiliation and her rejections (that is, that her people fell into the hand of the oppressor and the things brought upon her came to pass), we ask whether humiliation in the proper sense is anything other than sin, just as exaltation is right conduct. Rejection too comes about through nothing at work except wicked action, for this is enough to cast a person away from God and from everything that is by nature most beautiful. So when Jerusalem, that is, those who live in her, was drunk and beside herself with sin and was being humbled, she did not take pleasure in her failings. But when her repayments came, through her people falling into the hand of the oppressor with no one to help her, then she remembered the things on account of which she was suffering, understanding them to be the causes both of her people's fall and of her being left without help. And a little later: But if a soul of this kind is Jerusalem, it is worth asking who her people are. When they fall into the hand of the oppressor because there is no helper, she herself remembers the days of her humiliation, and also her own rejections by which she was cast away, and in addition all her desires from ancient days. Consider whether the people of Jerusalem are not the insights in the soul that has knowledge. Because the soul has fallen into inattention and carelessness, these insights fall, thrown down by everything that oppresses. For the doctrines of the

careless drain away, squeezed out by the sins that gain room in the person who neglects better things, since they no longer have any help from reason.

FRAGMENT 21

Lamentations 1:8. The sense of the passage is this. Since Jerusalem sinned a sin, she has become unstable and troubled, so much so that all who formerly honored her changed their minds and dishonored such a city, when they saw her disgrace. And she, for what she has suffered because of her sins, fallen into turmoil and into dishonor from those who once honored her, groans. She no longer goes forward in her sins but has lessened them and withdrawn backward. And a little later: But if a soul of this kind is called Jerusalem, quick-witted, sharp-sighted, and able to understand the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, then, since it is possible for her to sin for many reasons, the passage shows that she has fallen into turmoil, having withdrawn from good things and come to be among worse ones. Everyone who has fallen from virtue and lives together with vice is rightly said to be in turmoil.

FRAGMENT 22

It shows the checking of Jerusalem's sins. She no longer stretches forward to the failings that lie ahead, nor does she go on in her sins, but turns back, toward what is good and her own.

FRAGMENT 23

23a Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:9. On the literal, bodily reading, what is said here about Jerusalem is this: the uncleanness of Jerusalem is an obstacle. The prophet leaves us to work out what it is an obstacle to. Perhaps he does not only mean that the uncleanness hinders her journey. Even while she was in that state, he shows that Jerusalem did not remember her last things. Whoever keeps these before his eyes, and sees what will meet him because of his sins, will not sin. So because of this uncleanness there is an obstacle for her. And because she did not remember her last things, she brought down her wonderful and great possessions, which she had when she was worthy of being watched over, and she carried them down into lowliness. Before, they were immense and beyond all praise. Yet even after all this there was no one to comfort her. [The text here is corrupt; the sense seems to be:] "Consider her greatest losses; consider my humiliation, I who say, Lord, since the enemy is magnified over what has happened to my homeland." And after a few

lines: But following the rules of allegorical interpretation, we must ask whether it is possible for uncleanness to be in someone who is not the cause of it. Let us also look at the first thoughts of the Lament.

^{23b} A soul of this kind that has fallen is altogether in uncleanness, and this uncleanness prevents it from walking the holy way. God commanded holy Moses, and Jesus his successor, to take off their sandals when they stepped on a holy place, because it was not fitting to wear a dead skin on the feet in a sacred place. In the same way, if someone is to walk without hindrance, perhaps he must not only take off his sandals but also wash away the uncleanness that the dust has left around his feet. We think the Savior's act is a symbol of this. He put water into the basin and washed the disciples' feet. He spoke to Peter, who did not yet understand the mystery and so tried to stop him: "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me," and "What I am doing you do not know now, but you will know after these things." So it will be necessary [for us to recognize] the uncleanness around the feet, so to speak, of the soul, and to ask Jesus to wash it off, so that we may be able to have a part with him. For if that uncleanness remains, it is an obstacle to our walking the way in accordance with sound doctrine, that is, the Savior who said, "I am the way."

FRAGMENT 24

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:9. It is clear that the healthy soul, or at least the soul that wants to be healthy, does these things. It looks not so much at the present alone as ahead to what will meet it in the future from what is being done. Suppose something seems good in the present, but the soul foresees bitterness in the future. Then it sets aside what seems sweet and does the opposite, so that it will not later fall into something harsh. But suppose the present is painful, yet good hopes follow what looks hard. Then the soul gives itself willingly to the roughness of what some would think terrible, so that through having endured these hard things it may gain the sweet things that follow them.

FRAGMENT 25

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:9. He says that after suffering all this, the city more figuratively called Jerusalem did not even find anyone to comfort her. She turned away from the Word within her and gave herself wholly to passion. So she has lost her helper, who always arms against toils and against

what are thought to be terrors the disposition that pays attention to him. Then see my humiliation, as the citizen's kinsman of soul might say: the suffering of my fellow citizen, through which I was taught love for people, is my own misfortune. "Consider, then, O Lord, and do not abandon altogether the one who has suffered what was described. Do not overlook her enemy." I mean evil, grown great and poured out against her. The words "See, Lord, my humiliation" can be taken more figuratively as spoken by the Word who is within the soul, who has been dishonored and humbled and, so to speak, has lost his own kingdom.

FRAGMENT 26

The "desirable things" of Jerusalem should be understood as the things in the temple. These are the holy of holies, the [vessels] kept for the priestly service, and the other things believed to be divine because they were stored in the temple, such as the golden lampstand and the rest. The people were convinced that these things were kept in the temple for the glory of God. So they valued them above everything, and would themselves rather have suffered something harsh at the hands of the enemy than see any of these things fall into enemy hands. Those of the circumcision are accustomed to call the temple "the sanctuary."

FRAGMENT 27

Jerusalem suffered something most astonishing at the time of the captivity. She saw nations that God had commanded not to enter the assembly trampling the sanctuary. Even Israelites are not permitted to enter that place. Only the priests were counted worthy to be there, and only those who had received the purifications. The enemies went even as far as the forbidden places, into a place which the high priest enters only once a year, and then only barely and with great purification. And a little later: If Jerusalem, as we explained above, is a soul of this kind, then the good things that belong to her by nature should be understood as her adornment. By these she served the divine. They are stored in her inner places, which are closed to every word except the high priest, and they are called her "desirable things." Against all these things came the enemy who had won the wrestling match. He had pressed hard on the soul that was not fighting well on her own behalf but was deservedly abandoned by divine help. He stretched himself out with his power, which is active toward what is wicked, and tore her away from her ruling faculty. He

left the soul that had fallen away from God empty of good things. The nations in this passage should also be taken allegorically. They are the crowd of vices that has entered the ruling faculty. That faculty was made able to receive God, and to be a true sanctuary for the one who wishes to rest in a pure mind. God forbids these nations absolutely to enter the assembly. For what could we suppose God more properly forbids to enter a soul counted among the assembly of God than the works and mindset of the flesh? They are truly nations hostile to God. "For the flesh wars against the spirit," and the mindset of the flesh is enmity toward God. "For it is not subject to the law of God; indeed, it cannot be."

FRAGMENT 28

They groaned because of famine. For a little food, to bring back a fainting soul, they gave away their most precious things. But how could they give the treasures mentioned above to buy food, when the enemies had carried them off? The enemy "stretched out his hand over everything," but when he had taken his fill of what he wanted, he left the rest. In exchange for that remainder, they bought food.

FRAGMENT 29

"Look, Lord, at my dishonor" is a prayer from Jerusalem, who has lost her adornment because of the famine. Perhaps the treasures are of two kinds. The first are those described earlier, "against which the enemy stretched out his [hand]." The second are those belonging to each individual of the people. The enemy took the common treasures, and in place of their private ones each person bought food. Now for the higher meaning. Esau sold his birthright for the sake of red stew, from which he got the name Edom, that is, Red Land. He became earthly, since he despised the birthright and put earthly things first. Jacob pursued the same things only in second place, as necessities, because he was in a body. Jerusalem is like this too. But Esau gave Jacob, the worthy one, the desirable things he had, even if he had not chosen them first. The people of Jerusalem also gave their treasures for the sake of food. But they did not give them to a holy man who had prepared the food. They gave them to Babylonians, who were going to treat the treasures they were given with contempt. Jacob knows how to adorn what comes from Esau, but the Babylonians do not use what they are given for any good of their own. In the same way a soul, for lack of necessary provisions, throws

away the divine teachings to those who, out of idle curiosity, want to learn them in order to slander and mock.

FRAGMENT 30

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:13. He has described the fire that came with the capture, which took hold of the strongest buildings, or else the capture of the leading citizens in the city, who were burned, as it were, in soul and in outward things by their calamities. He also shows the seizing of the lower classes into slavery, as in a field of nets. These were the people who had not used their freedom well. They were not stretching forward to the things ahead of them [text uncertain: something seems to be missing], but turned back to the things behind. They turned from glory to dishonor and from freedom to slavery. Instead of being honored, they became dimmed and obscure, through dishonor and outrage. Because of all this the city has fallen into endless grief.

FRAGMENT 31

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:14. Providence, she says, has not been asleep over my ungodly acts. God, as though taking them into his hands, has examined them and woven them into the works of recompense. They have become for me like a yoke on the neck, and he has laid slavery upon me. For the slavery I served to Nebuchadnezzar is my own ungodliness. So I have become powerless, handed over to masters whose rule I cannot endure. And a little later: "His yoke is on my neck." This present text shows that what is said of God as if it were about our own passions must be taken more figuratively. For how else could Jerusalem's ungodly acts be woven together by the hand of God, except figuratively? No one would say that these things happen in a bodily way. And would it not be absurd to take the neck figuratively, since Jerusalem is a city, and yet not to hear the members spoken of as God's in the same manner? Let it now be said as if by a soul that has fallen asleep into ungodliness. It has kicked free from the saving yoke of sound reason, which the Savior calls "easy," and has slipped under the yoke of its ungodly acts. Through these it grew weak, abandoned by God's oversight and handed over to sin, the ruler of evils. Because wickedness is boundless and without limit, the soul cannot fully serve sin's wishes or ever give it enough. Sin truly humbles, chokes, and makes a person look downward. A yoke, too, is the conscience that always chokes and wounds, will not allow the head to be lif-

ted, and strips away all boldness. It has caused, she says, a slackening even of the strength which I did not use well, and I am undone as I look at the evils that hold me fast.

FRAGMENT 32

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:15. He did not take them from my midst. For even if I had been deprived of them, it would have been possible to use them for other purposes. Instead he condemned them to suffer in my midst because of the ungodly things I did. My chosen ones have suffered the most grievous things, since the Lord himself trod the wine of his wrath in the winepress, to the full, for me and for the virgin of Judah, the most royal. By “strong men” he might mean those mighty in war who defended the homeland, and by “chosen” the well-born or the wise. The phrase “he trod the winepress” is made clear by what is said in the Psalms about the punishment of sinners: “a cup in the hand of the Lord, full of unmixed mixture.” It is tipped from one person being punished to the next, until “all the sinners of the earth” drink. The dregs are left for those who are still more sinful than these, and into these last “the dregs” will be emptied.

FRAGMENT 33

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:15. It is not hard to see how the Lord trod a winepress for the virgin daughter of Judah. For “what each person sows, that he will also reap,” and perhaps also what he cultivates, that he will also harvest as grapes. So the one who has made a better wine will rejoice in his own produce. But the one who has cultivated the vine of Sodom and the shoot of Gomorrah, and has borne the grape of gall, the cluster of bitterness, and the incurable wrath of asps, will have all these gathered by the Lord into one winepress. His evil works will be trodden and squeezed, and in keeping with such fruits he will drink, so as to vomit up the gall, the bitterness, and the wrath. And he will drink: according to Jeremiah, in order to vomit it out; according to Isaiah, in order to be roused and to put on the glory that is his by kinship. For the Lord does not tread a winepress for nothing, least of all for the virgin daughter of Judah.

FRAGMENT 34

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:15. The soul received from its Creator many powerful and choice gifts. Now it has lost them through wickedness and is paying the penalty, and it confesses what it has suffered. The time summoned

to crush it is the time of repayment. According to Ezekiel, at that time none of all the righteous deeds the righteous man has done will be remembered in the day of sin. But by mourning over what has happened, the soul is helped, since those who mourn and weep have the promise of comfort and laughter.

FRAGMENT 35

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:16. She said that the cause of her groaning is that there is no one to turn her soul back, or, in Symmachus's words, no one to restore it. She says also that the sons have been wiped out, because the enemy has grown strong through the things in which they sinned. For when we are godly he has no strength. He grows weak as we advance and is put to death as we are made perfect. He is crushed under our feet, ground fine like dust before the face of the wind, and ground fine like the mud of the streets. For he is fed, and gains power, in proportion to our sins. But when we stop doing wrong, he is destroyed as if by famine. Conversely, when we do well we strengthen the divine powers for ourselves, and when we sin we drive them away. That is why Symmachus, in place of "wiped out," gave "desolate." These words could be spoken by a soul that has been contemplating the truth but through carelessness has lost the Word who gladdened it, and all her fruits, which are called her sons. This happened because evil, her enemy, has been strengthened against her.

FRAGMENT 36

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:17. By Zion he means the mountain, by Jacob the people, and by Jerusalem the mother city. God gave Jacob commandments, and because they were transgressed, Jacob was surrounded by enemies. But according to Symmachus, and according to another edition of the Seventy, the Lord commanded that those who afflict him be all around him. This was done through the powers assigned to do harm.

FRAGMENT 37

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:17. By the phrase "as a woman set apart," he has shown the uncleanness of Jerusalem that came through sin. By "in the midst" he means either between Zion and Jacob, or in the middle of the whole mountain (for Jerusalem is built on only part of it) and of the whole people, with Jacob here meaning the twelve tribes. Taken literally, Zion and Jerusalem can be understood in two ways: either as places or as the people who live in them. If Zion is a place, her hands are her works, such as farming

and whatever is made by hand. He says these hands are spread out and not busy, not doing with the hands the fitting work, as in an idle and desolate land. If he means the inhabitants, the hands would be the farmers and workers, who do not set their hands to work because of what has surrounded them. And if the hands of Zion are interpreted figuratively, how much more the “members” of God in Scripture. The mountain itself, so to speak, groans together with the nation, having no comfort, neither God nor any holy man.

FRAGMENT 38

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:18. By “the mouth of the Lord” we should understand the prophets. Isaiah was one of them, and he said, “For the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things.” Jerusalem was reproached by the Savior as “the one who kills the prophets.” In this sense she also embittered the mouth of the Lord, by handing the prophets over to the most bitter sufferings. God, who seeks the blood of the prophets, hands over her young men and virgins to the sufferings of wars, and then again to captivities. So she confesses for the things she has suffered, offering herself as an example to others, so that they may learn God’s righteousness and not suffer similar things.

FRAGMENT 39

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:18. Beyond the literal sense, take the virgins to be those who live in purity and incorruption, and the young men to be those who are well regarded for virtue. For often the saints also suffer together with those who are guilty.

FRAGMENT 40

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:19. Ezekiel has shown who the lovers are. He says to Jerusalem, whom he calls Oholibah: “Thus says the Lord Lord: Look, I am rousing your lovers against you from every side, the sons of Babylon and all the Chaldeans.” These had formerly been friends, but by divine providence they turned into enemies. This often happens when love turns to hatred. For about Samaria he says: “And Holla played the whore away from me and attached herself to her lovers, the Assyrians.” A little later he says: “Therefore he handed her over into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the sons of the Assyrians.” And he says about Jerusalem: “And her sister

Oliba saw it, and she made her attachment more corrupt than the whoring of her sister, and she attached herself to the sons of the Assyrians.”

FRAGMENT 41

Lamentations 1:20. In the prophecy, the soul is in pain as one who is about to suffer terrible things. In the present Lament, as though these things have already happened, she is distressed. She confesses that, because of sin, the kindness of God has made itself most bitter. The result is that she who had many children has been made childless, and, worst of all, by the hand of an enemy. Since this is personification, we should not look for a city’s womb that gave birth, or for a heart that has been loosened.

FRAGMENT 42

Lamentations 1:21. Jerusalem divides her speech between the enemies, whom she wants to hear her, and God. But why does she urge the enemies to listen? And why does she tell God about them, that they rejoiced? Perhaps it is because salvation came to the Gentiles through her own and Israel’s transgression, to make them jealous. And when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved. So she speaks the first words prophetically [to those] from the Gentiles, and the second words to God. “I was abandoned to suffer, so that you might receive room. Because of you I have become an enemy of God, although by election I am beloved because of the fathers. So when you hear my groaning, understand also its cause. I have been abandoned completely for the sake of your salvation, and I have no one to comfort me always after the trial of evils. For now a ruler has failed from Judah, and a leader from his thighs. For he came for whom the things laid up were [gap in the text], the expectation of the [gap in the text]. And since his blood is being avenged, there is no one still to comfort Jerusalem.”

FRAGMENT 43

Lamentations 1:22. That is: let their wickedness not be allowed to go further, but let it come under your oversight. It is like someone praying that his wounds might come to the eye of a doctor so as to receive a complete cure. This is the meaning of “all.” It is blessed above all not to sin. The second blessing is that all our wickedness be overseen by God.

FRAGMENT 44

Lamentations 1:22. “To glean” means, after the harvest, to gather the small amounts of what was left behind, which is what the poor do. So when you

oversaw me carefully, you used to cleanse my vine shoots, removing everything worse, down to the smallest things, [of the grape and of the cluster of bitterness]. In the same way, deal so with my enemies. This is to my advantage, since if they are completely saved, then I too, Lord, will obtain salvation according to your judgment. Seeing them, I am deeply grieved and I condemn myself, because I need your oversight.

FRAGMENT 45

Lamentations 2:3. A similar statement is in David: "He will crush all the horns of sinners." Here he means the rulers, in whom the strength of the nation lies, as it does in the horned animals. They also stand out above the body, as rulers do above their subjects. Daniel also compared kingdoms to horns. The horn also shows the arrogance of those in command, as in the words, "Do not lift up your horn on high." So he turned away his saving hand and made them easy prey for their enemies, whom he also called a flame consuming everything. You could also say that every outstanding thought is a horn, and that the "passions of dishonor" are the fire. The wrongdoer is handed over to these, having lost all the help that surrounded him, in line with the words, "The angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him."

FRAGMENT 46

Lamentations 2:4. For the enemies dared to carry out slaughter in the temple, with God allowing it. "As an enemy" is well said, for God does not punish out of enmity. He wants to benefit either those who suffer or those who watch. He calls the temple a "tent," in keeping with the sanctuary from the beginning. He calls the bow his power to punish, as in Habakkuk: "You will surely stretch your bow against the scepters, says the Lord," meaning the opposing rulers and authorities. The Son, who is the right hand of God and Father, fought mightily [gap in the text]. He overthrew even the idols that they had set up in the temple of God (for these were "the desire of the eyes"), and in place of the idols he killed the demons who had made their dwelling there.

FRAGMENT 47

He says "baris," meaning the houses, which Symmachus rendered "royal residences." He takes up the laments again, like someone racked with grief in mourning. Again he shows that [the soul] has taken on a lowly way of reas-

oning and a lowly frame of mind. The things that were like dwellings and fortresses, which as it were filled the ruling faculty, have been pulled down. The virtues are the dwellings, for they shelter us, and the strongholds are the irrefutable lines of reasoning. For this time the pulling down is not of the worse kind of height, those that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, [nor of the humility by which one learns the ordinances of the Lord]. These are matters for joy, and they are not by nature worthy [of mourning].

FRAGMENT 48

By “tent” he means the temple. By “vine” and “vineyard” he means Israel, as in David’s words, “You brought a vine out of Egypt,” and in Isaiah, “a vineyard, a vineyard, came to be for the beloved.” David goes on, “Why did you tear down its hedge?” and what follows. Isaiah says, “You took away its hedge,” and what follows that. The present Lament also made these things plain. For God drew in his own guard and gave them over to the enemies. [The angel of the Lord] no longer encamped around him, because [he] did not fear [the Lord]. He also did away with the appointed times of worship under the law, as he says in Isaiah: “My soul hates your fasting, your idleness and your feasts.” This he called “forgetting,” but not as though it were a human passion. He stirred up king and priest to anger. They were indignant that, though they were God’s own portion, they suffered such things at the hands of the ungodly.

FRAGMENT 49

He gave up the vessels used in worship. He was no longer pleased with sacrifices from the ungodly, as in the words, “I do not want whole burnt offerings of rams, the fat of lambs, or the blood of bulls and goats.” He also gave up the wall that held the city’s houses together, that is, the royal palaces, as Symmachus rendered it. The enemy took the temple as well, as though this were their final victory, and from then on they held a festival, shouting loudly. The altar of the soul is the rational part in us, through which the passions are offered up as sacrifice, being put to death.

FRAGMENT 50

For he took away all her security, stretching out the measure of the punishment. Zechariah also saw this.

FRAGMENT 51

The wall and the outer wall mourn. These are things worthy of mourning, and they become a cause of weeping even for those who see them. As blessed Isaiah says, "For who will scatter the Lord's counsel? And who will turn back his lifted hand?" When a city, or a soul, mourns such things, so that it becomes a thing trampled by its enemies, it is likely that the angels mourn who formerly guarded it, one after another, both greater and lesser. For if they rejoice over those who are saved, how will they not mourn over those who fall?

FRAGMENT 52

For they have become invisible, as though swallowed up by earth or sea. King and rulers perished, and the false prophets, and her law as well, through the necessity of slavery. In fact they had abolished that law by their own choice even before they were captured. The gates of the soul are the senses. When the soul sins, they are flooded with passions and become earthly. The powers of the soul that guard the senses are also loosened, since the mind that rules and the ruling lines of reasoning are lost among the passions. Then the law and order of the soul are destroyed, and it becomes Babylon, full of confusion, with nothing of providence left that is helped by God.

FRAGMENT 53

He relates grievous sights that happened in the place of gladness. For out of fear they would not even let the elders lament, and they made the foremost virgins look at the ground. They did this so that, if they appeared, they might not draw the enemy [to violence] by the beauty in which they excelled. You could also say this of those who were long ago elders in virtue, which is why they were so called. They have become earthly and settled among irrational passions, so that they no longer do anything according to reason. They have made the ruling spirit in them earthbound. They have made the self-control they once had something worthy of mourning. And they have corrupted the lines of reasoning that they once kept uncorrupted.

FRAGMENT 54

The prophet speaks of their "own glory": the temple of God and the piety of the fatherland. It was famine that caused the fainting of the infants. You could say something loftier: that he makes his own the sufferings of his kinsmen according to the flesh, as in "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" He

takes on their afflictions of soul. These are the withering of true knowledge, the unsteady drift of reasoning toward earthly things, and the loss of the one who lifts up the head, as in “You, Lord, are my helper, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.”

FRAGMENT 55

He showed complete wickedness, so that it has no testimony of virtue, and no sinner has anything comparable. For what sin is like that of the one who is far from God, or who drew near and then became unruly? “For if I had not come,” he says, “and spoken to them, they would not have had sin.” So also: “I will be sanctified among those who draw near to me.” For the one who does not know the Lord’s will and does not do it will be beaten with few blows, but the one who knows and does not do it will be beaten with many. A suffering this great, which prophets have not been able to heal, needs God alone. That is why he also took on flesh, since the prophets confessed their weakness in the words “Lord, who has believed our report?” Jerusalem also said earlier: “See whether there is any suffering like my suffering.” So the one who struck will heal. For he himself causes pain, and he restores again. The word “who” is used both of what is rare and of what is nothing. For no human being can heal the blow that God brings.

FRAGMENT 56

A vain prophecy is one that has no outcome, and the kind that vain idols provide. Some also prophesied from themselves, supposedly “for a handful of barley and a piece of bread,” as it is written. They do not know how to expose sins or to rescue people from captivity to demons, but twist souls with their smooth talk. What the true prophets receive, and the word they take from God, is true and joins people to God. In the same way, what comes from demons is false, takes people far from God, and drives them out from the inclination that comes from him. Which “banishments” and “receipts” are not vain, as has been shown? Clearly, those that drive out error and bring people to God.

FRAGMENT 57

“For our enemy the devil prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to swallow.” He is also like a snake hissing at us. But may it never happen that he says, “I have swallowed him,” or that he [find] in us the day that the scorching sun produces. For it is said: “By day the sun will not scorch you.”

The sun scorches with pleasures and anger, and it offers error as if it were light and knowledge. So as we sing the psalms we will say: "If the Lord had not been among us, they would then have swallowed us alive," and "the lamp of the ungodly will be put out."

FRAGMENT 58

He says that the enemies did nothing of themselves. It seemed good to God, and so it happened. That is why Nebuzaradan also said: "The Lord your God spoke these evils against this place, and the Lord brought them, because you sinned against him." So everyone who does not believe will hear the judgment contained in these words. All the prophets foretold these things, and from ancient days Moses indicated them beforehand in Deuteronomy.

FRAGMENT 59

Scripture sometimes makes its words full of feeling and gives perception to what cannot perceive. It introduces hills leaping and mountains skipping, and calls on hills and stones as witnesses. That is impossible in this case, since the wall has already been pulled down by enemies. So the wall here means the king, the rulers, and all who fortify the city with their power. He asks them to pour out unceasing tears of repentance, which the fallen wall constantly causes in those who see it. These tears, he says, belong to them, unless it again signifies the grief of the power that once guarded the city, and he is showing this by exaggeration. "In affliction," he says, "they remembered the Lord with their whole heart." So do this, he says: weep night and day, and "be pierced with remorse upon your beds." Do not think that being released from these things is sobriety, for repentance leads to salvation. A person becomes sober by ceasing from worse things, not from good ones. Keep your mind joined to Christ at all times, so that he may guard you as the apple of his eye and become a wall for you.

FRAGMENT 60

Night calls for attention, because in it the soul is gathered in on itself while the senses are at rest. Then the text tells us to meditate on the commandments of God and to say with David: "By night I meditated with my heart, and my spirit searched." The night is divided into four watches, so say with David: "My eyes got ahead of the watches." Say also with Habakkuk: "I will stand at my watch, and I will keep looking out to see what the Lord God will say in me." For then you will say: "He will speak peace to his people." So

meditate in the night of the present age. “Your wrestling is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities.” “For you do not know when the master of the house is coming, late, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning; he may come suddenly and find you asleep.” And again: “If you had known in what watch the thief was coming, you would have stayed awake and would not have let your house be broken into.”

FRAGMENT 61

Lift up your hands to him by working what is good. The struggle is no small matter. For lack of the divine word, your little ones are fainting. They stand at the beginning of every way out, which is the commandments of God, and they cannot go forward without God’s help and without the bread that strengthens the heart.

FRAGMENT 62

After the prophet urged her, Jerusalem was persuaded and says to God: “Do not turn your face away from me.” “Look upon me and have mercy on me.” “Do not reprove me in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath.” The blow is greater than human nature can bear. I know that I broke the law, and I know the penalties that follow from it. Among them is this: “You shall eat the offspring of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters.” I thought those words went no further than a threat. But, Lord, “your law is truth.” What I had never heard of was the slaughter of priest and prophet in the middle of the temple.

FRAGMENT 63

All who were too weak for hard labor because of their age lay thrown on the ground. It was a most pitiable sight, as was the slaughter of young men and virgins. [text uncertain] Would that they had been slaughtered before being led off to a more bitter life. The “outlets of the earth” are the affairs of ordinary life. In these they fell asleep, without having kept watch or prayed, and folly had closed the eyes of their souls. And who are these people? If they were children, it would not be so surprising. But now it is those who seemed to have advanced in virtue, everyone whose soul was uncorrupted and strong in battle, who have fallen into the hands of their enemies. You, you, as the good one, put an end to such a life of theirs, and cut to pieces their whole combined strength set against what is good.

FRAGMENT 64

Those around me, he says, who live in Judea, thought of the feast held for me as a refuge, hoping to find salvation from it. Not one of them is left, because of the anger you brought upon them. For through the very things they sinned, their enemies have become many and strong.

FRAGMENT 65

Terrible things happened to the prophet, both before the city was captured and after it had been taken. So he begins another letter of the alphabet and laments for himself, as he sees the poverty and desolation of the city because of the Lord's discipline. He himself came to be no less in want of good things. He was in difficult circumstances when he was rebuking these people, so that he says: "I was mocked all day long." He was also sharing in the calamities of their sufferings, and in the [sympathy] that comes from it [text incomplete]. He says also, in the words of David: "The shadow of death overshadowed me." For whenever he seems to give a brief rest from the labors, he turns back again and makes the punishment unending.

FRAGMENT 66

"All the day" means every day, as in David: "All day long he fought against me and afflicted me." "He turned his hand" could also mean this: he once supplied me with good things, but now he brings discipline, as if he had changed his hand.

FRAGMENT 67

He means the rottenness that has come upon us from sin.

FRAGMENT 68

For lasting calamity produces the weakness of old age.

FRAGMENT 69

For he did not let me escape the terrors, since I was besieged on every side. He may also mean the hostile wall thrown around the city. He gave voice to the same words as David, who said, "They made me sit in dark places, like those long dead." This was because of the prisons the enemy made, and at the same time because of the calamities that came from God; for trials are a darkness of the soul. Jeremiah knew this also from the pit into which Pashhur threw him, a place dark and without light, like the cave in which David hid from Saul. The two Lamentations could also be taken as spoken of Christ, of

whom Jeremiah was a type, since he suffered so much at the hands of the Jews and in the end was handed over to the tomb.

FRAGMENT 70

He has wrapped me in evils I cannot escape. He has laid on my neck a harsh and bitter people, a burden greater than I am. Though I often prayed to be relieved, I was not heard; for circumstances sometimes prevent the saints from being heard. He may also mean the yoke and the iron collars which, at God's command, he put on in place of wooden ones; for Scripture also says, "He made the bronze on my neck heavy." For he blocked my prayer, and he said to him, "Do not pray for them, for I will not listen to you."

FRAGMENT 71

For though he often set out to do so, he was not permitted to refuse the service. He used to say, "I will not mention the name of the Lord," and yet he was driven on as if by fire. God also blocks the ways of sinners, not allowing them to sin. But the prophet is not like that, for he says, "I did not sit in the company of those who make sport."

FRAGMENT 72

He says: he has shot every arrow of his against me, wounding my desire and not allowing me to act as I wish.

FRAGMENT 73

In Scripture the "kidneys" stand for the faculty of desire, and the "arrows" are the shafts. They went on ridiculing me as a liar and made me their song. He had said earlier, "I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness," and what follows. For he pleaded on their behalf, while they plotted against him, and still he could not refuse the service. So he was embittered: by what he suffered at their hands, by sharing the pain of those who suffered, and by his deep distress over the ungodly.

FRAGMENT 74

He says "with a pebble" or "by number," as when each tooth is struck on the jaw, or with a hard stone. And in keeping with David he says, "I ate ashes for my bread," meaning that under affliction he could not even take bread with pleasure. So the soul could not be at peace, since it was itself troubled and saw besides, outside, uproars, and inside, battles. Therefore, hoping for nothing good, I let out the words of Job: "Mercy has given me up, and my hope from

the Lord.” For it was not possible to overcome the terrors that surrounded me.

FRAGMENT 75

For though he is good to all, he asks of us patience. For to the soul that will seek him, the seeking is good, if it endures without being disturbed until mercy meets it, and without moving away, until the salvation of the Lord appears, to hope in another. Perhaps he also means that it will be quiet, not meddling in the judgments of providence. So even if we do not understand, we must not kick against the Lord.

FRAGMENT 76

Because “his yoke is easy and his burden light.” Let no one agree with him about anything, we must not be carried off with him; but even if we are left alone in this, we must hold firm to what has been decided and be firmly rooted. For David says, “The Lord settles the single-minded in a house,” and “I am alone, until I pass over,” clearly meaning that he obtains kindness through the trials.

FRAGMENT 77

For he will humble himself, saying, “But I am earth and ashes,” if he is truly a man, and he is filled with a hope that does not put to shame, like the words, “My soul clung to the ground.”

FRAGMENT 78

This also fits those in the captivity who say what is in the seventy-third Psalm: “Why, O God, have you rejected us to the end? Has your anger burned against the sheep of your pasture?” In agreement is the saying, “The Lord will not reject to the end, nor be angry forever.” And to the one who repents as he deserves, he will say, “Let your voice cease from weeping, and your eyes from tears.”

FRAGMENT 79

From these words we learn that the Lord did not say, and is not the cause, that the prisoners of the earth are humbled by sin. Nor does he bend human judgments aside before God [text corrupt]. “He loves what is just and right.” Nor is he the cause of a man becoming deserving of condemnation. For, he says, opposites cannot come out of the mouth of the Lord, the good things and the evil. Neither does a good tree produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree good

fruit. So men being wronged by wicked people is [contrary to] divine judgment. Yet it still happens among those whom God overlooks, as happened to the Israelites at the hands of their enemies, and it is undone when they turn back to God. Therefore those handed over to punishment must look for this turning.

FRAGMENT 80

So when we grumble, we lay the blame on the Creator in vain. A living man cannot do this. Such a choice belongs to those who are dead in sins, unless it exposes the one who lives in sin and blames God. Since, then, we have no other cause than ourselves alone, let us judge what we ourselves have done, and turn back.

FRAGMENT 81

For it is not possible to turn back to the Lord while ignorant of oneself. A person comes to know himself by bringing his mind to bear on his actions. He examines them, and at the same time makes them rational [or: spiritual]. For then “with unveiled face we behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.” Confessing our former deeds, we will say that “we have sinned and fallen away from you,” and that “you are righteous in all that you have brought upon us.”

FRAGMENT 82

“To lift up our hearts upon our hands” seems to mean this: taking our own thoughts, as it were, into our hands, let us examine whether they are pure.

FRAGMENT 83

These words too are part of the confession already made. For you brought the troubles of terrible things on us like darkness out of a cloud. You pursued us when we were far from you. Through punishment you destroyed us, who were dead in sin. Our sins separated us from you, like a cloud building a wall between us. So our prayer did not reach you. For we did not have “the wings of a dove” to fly over and say, “By my God I will leap over a wall.” It was not easy to get past sin, which is solid and dark and has no share in the Holy Spirit.

FRAGMENT 84

Symmachus: “terror.” “They swallowed us with a whole mouth.” We were carried down into a depth of evils, filled with fear and confusion. For the sin-

ner falls into the pit he dug, paying the penalty for what he sinned. And since, according to Solomon, “arrogance goes before destruction” (that is, pride), we were puffed up and we were crushed. Hence David sings: “Let not the foot of pride come to me, and let not the hand of a sinner shake me.”

FRAGMENT 85

Though he has suffered so much, he grieves deeply for those who did it. So it is that “love does not reckon evil.”

FRAGMENT 86

Where the Septuagint has “my eye was worn out, and will not be silent, so that there is no sobering up,” Symmachus said: “my eye persisted and did not cease, so that there is no relief.” The Seventy show that, although his eyes had been weakened by the great quantity of tears, he did not stop, being unable to recover from his weeping. Symmachus shows that I persisted in tears and did not stop. For earnest prayer and intense tears draw God to mercy.

FRAGMENT 87

“For the tears cut me down,” he says, “like a careful grape-harvester cutting a vine.” According to Symmachus, “the tears drowned me,” a metaphor taken from people choking in water. “But enduring, I will endure the Lord, until he [turns] his face away from us.” God’s looking down means that he counts us worthy of his oversight. He explains the phrase “beyond all” by adding “upon all,” that is, upon their misfortunes. For the female sex is more pitiable than the male.

FRAGMENT 88

Or he is telling what he has suffered. For he was thrown into a pit, and [as far as it went, he died]. But he was saved beyond hope, and says with David: “My soul was delivered like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters.” For, according to the Savior’s word, it was not possible to “fall to the ground without the Father.” So then, either he is speaking of himself, or he is making the sufferings of the people his own. But the words “without cause” would reasonably be said of him. For how did he wrong them? Or rather, did he not do them good?

FRAGMENT 89

God passed judgment by killing the false prophet and handing over the king. In the time of Christ he handed the nation over to be captured. The words “I

am before their eyes” mean that I was a burden to them, even just by being seen.

FRAGMENT 90

He also said earlier: “Make an end of them, and your word will be to me for gladness and joy of my heart.” He said this after the plot against the Saviour, when they were scattered everywhere. For [all that is just] came upon them. So this shows that their worship came to an end, and that they are no longer called a nation of God.

FRAGMENT 91

The phrase “the shielding of the heart—toil for them” means this: you will give them toil, so that they come to feel how great a protector of them you were, and so seek you again. If not, you will pursue them in your anger.

FRAGMENT 92

He begins the fourth alphabetic section, which is now before us. He takes up again the lament over the distinguished, in a special way. He says that their splendor has grown dim and has vanished, as if poured out like water.

FRAGMENT 93

“Holy” here means chosen, either on account of the fathers or on account of the holy ones taken captive with Joakim, whom he compared to good figs. And a little later: [the departures] from the holy land lead [away] into the spiritual Babylonian [realm], “that they may be taught not to blaspheme.” You could also say that the lament applies to those who have turned away from godliness, if they were notable and became leaders of error for others. They have left the fountain of living water and have become broken cisterns that cannot hold water. So it is fitting that they are poured out around error, groaning before their time.

FRAGMENT 94

Those who prided themselves on wealth, he says, who were even more precious than gold: how were they led into slavery and likened to cheap, shattered things? It was said that they are compared to such things also when [Jeremiah] went down to the potter’s house and took a vessel [...]. Isaiah likewise says of a fallen city, “its ruins will be like the fragments of a vessel.”

FRAGMENT 95

He speaks of the famine among the infants of the glorious. Jerusalem could not even offer them the breast as wild animals do. The extremity of the suffering causes even nature to be forgotten. “Dragons,” or “Sirens” in Symmachus, is to be understood of the evil spirits, who nurse their own newborn with evil milk. Such are those who are led in by the teachings of the ungodly.

FRAGMENT 96

For how are they not “daughters,” those who have been made effeminate, whom even Pharaoh keeps alive while he kills the males? They feed on the teaching, the desert of God. They cannot fly away like ostriches, but are always running along the ground. (Symmachus rendered “the sparrow” in this way.) It is not unfitting that he called their teachers Sirens. According to the myth outside the faith, the Sirens destroyed those who came by, through pleasure, just as dragons do once they have sunk in their venom. So he rebukes these supposedly good teachers, because they did not take as much care of their pupils as even these creatures do.

FRAGMENT 97

They suffered these things while under siege and while being led away. You could also say that they endured “a famine, not of bread, nor of water,” as the prophet says, “but of hearing the word of the Lord.” For this reason he prophesies about them as newborn infants.

FRAGMENT 98

In the historical sense he has gone back to what happened in the captivity. But in the deeper sense he is speaking of the famine of the teaching word.

FRAGMENT 99

For the poor who are ill-treated are not so pitiable as these. Paul also laments over these, saying, “to whom belong the adoption and the glory.” For now they busy themselves with empty things, and they take no delight in [Moses] and the prophets, in the words “delight yourself in the Lord.” There is no one to prepare the nourishing word for them. Nor do they share in the fattened calf, even though they themselves have offered the sacrifice. By “outlets” he means the dispersions, or else the distortions of the written letters of the Law.

FRAGMENT 100

Formerly they were brought up in scarlet, hearing beforehand, in prophecy, of the Saviour's blood that was to be poured out. Now, because of their earthly thoughts, they are dressed in rags.

FRAGMENT 101

Symmachus renders one phrase as "as if in haste, suddenly he gave her up," and the other as "they did not suffer, [she] whom they did not wound." What is quicker than the divine word, which said, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate," and handed it over by willing alone? The lawlessness of Jerusalem was made greater than that of Sodom. The Sodomites had only the natural law. These people had the written law as well, and the prophets, and everything God did among them in marvelous ways. Those others sinned against angels and against men like themselves. These sinned against the Savior and Redeemer. Long ago he redeemed them from Egypt, and now from the worship of demons. This is so if they really did receive [him] who came to them first of all. For he says, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

FRAGMENT 102

Symmachus: "Her undefiled ones, set apart, [were] snow, brighter than milk, ruddier in bodily condition than the things men gaze at; their limbs were sapphire; their appearance was darker than soot." He means those who sanctified themselves to God. "Sanctified" indicates the Nazirites. For this is how Symmachus and Theodotion rendered "the sanctified" in Amos, calling them Nazirites. Moses also mentions them, and Samson was one of this kind. They were also distinguished among the Jews. So he compared their purity to snow and their brightness to milk. They were made red as with fire, tested by the discipline of what they had promised to God. Their chosen ones [this is the excerpt] have a heavenly way of life, for that is the color of sapphire. The sapphire also has golden veins, and Symmachus likens their condition to these. It has incorruptibility and a fiery zeal in the worship of God.

FRAGMENT 103

They fell away from spiritual illumination and wasted away with a famine of the mind. So they came to look like dry trees, those not planted beside the channels of the waters. Such now are their priests, who [lack] good spiritual nourishment. Taking the words literally, their faces were blackened with the

utmost shame, because they were sinning like the others and were led away. Even now common usage employs this word for those who are put to shame.

FRAGMENT 104

It is better to die quickly in war than to be broken by famine through the lack of the produce of the field. You could say that the word of God is a sword and a blade. For Paul says, “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The bride says she is “wounded with love” by it. David also says, “Gird your sword upon your thigh, mighty one, in your splendor and your beauty.” Those struck by such a sword fall under the feet of Jesus, according to the words “peoples will fall under you.” They confess his kingdom, and are not captured by a famine of the soul. For Christ is the produce of the land, he who was born in Bethlehem, which means “House of Bread.” The Jews, having never tasted him, were carried off to the land of demons. The field blessed by the Lord, and very fragrant, which Jacob breathed in, signifies the church of Christ.

FRAGMENT 105

So that the women would not seem to have eaten their children out of cruelty, he says that they were compassionate. He attributes the terrible deed to the pressure of want. The word “they boiled” means they kindled a fire and roasted. This is what happened in the Roman siege. So he calls the total destruction of the nation a “ruin.” In the second alphabetical section of the Lamentations he also mentions the present suffering. Josephus recorded this and the other sufferings accurately in his work on the capture of the city.

FRAGMENT 106

For after the coming of Christ these things were brought to completion.

FRAGMENT 107

Perhaps it was because of the strength of the place, the wall, and the might of its inhabitants. But most of all it was because of God, who always shielded the city. Even so, before Nebuchadnezzar the Egyptian came in and often took the treasures from the house of the Lord, yet he did not sack the city. He did not press it too hard, even though he was an enemy, so that it would not seem out of place for the unexpected thing to happen twice and three times. The text could also mean by “kings of the earth” the demons who ruled over the earthly (those made of dust). Of them it was said: “All the kings of the earth stood by, and their rulers were gathered together against

the Lord and against his Christ.” Who these are is made clear by the words “for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,” and by “so that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” For they thought Jerusalem would not be handed over to the end. They supposed the promise made to the fathers reached no further than this nation, and they knew nothing about Christ.

FRAGMENT 108

“Righteous blood” in the proper sense is the blood of the Saviour Christ. When they shed it they were utterly destroyed, whereas for the blood of the prophets they had been only moderately disciplined.

FRAGMENT 109

Symmachus says: “They became unsettled, blind in their goings out; they were defiled with blood, so that they could not touch their garments.” Scripture calls the angels “watchers,” as in Daniel. These were perhaps the ones through whom the law was given by Moses, according to the words “for if the law spoken through angels.” So these angels, who had remained devoted to Jerusalem and to the divine temple, were shaken and departed. For Josephus records, in his work on the capture of the city, that “at night the priests went into the temple, as was their custom for the services. They said that first they felt a movement, and after that a sudden voice: ‘Let us depart from here.’” At that time, according to Symmachus, they became unsettled, wanderers, and “blind in their goings out.” For there was no vision to make distinctions, no prophet, and no leader. They failed because the one had come for whom it was all kept in store, the one who was the expectation of the nations.

FRAGMENT 110

He commands the apostles to flee from the midst of the Jews, who had been defiled by the blood of Christ. But the task of calling them he also entrusted to the angels. Unless, perhaps, he commands the apostles to call these unclean people to repentance, which they did when they said: “It was necessary that the word be spoken to you first.” When the Jews were unwilling, he orders the apostles to flee. That is why they say, of those who were unwilling, “Behold, we turn to the Gentiles.”

FRAGMENT 111

“They were kindled” shows the fire of the capture. “They were shaken” shows their removal into slavery. “They shall not add to sojourn” shows that they will have a lasting sojourn and will no longer need a second one.

FRAGMENT 112

This shows the punishment that comes from Christ. For David says: “[the face] of the Lord is against those who do evil.” They are not looked upon by him; they remain what they are. For when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, all Israel will be saved, and from then on it is as a believer [that each is saved]. If the reading is “their portion,” he clearly means those who go out from the midst. As for the enemies, “they did not respect the face of priests,” for they led all of them away.

FRAGMENT 113

The words seem to come from the captives, who repent that they had leaned on the Egyptians and the Assyrians for help. They could also be said, fittingly, by those who believed from the circumcision: “We failed in vain, hoping in the law.” For the law saves no one, as Paul said. So those who cling to the law will not be able to help anyone after grace has come.

FRAGMENT 114

The ones who hunted the Jews, who were infants in mind, had been shown by the Saviour to be “fishers of men.” They hunted them so that they would not walk the broad and spacious road of their fathers. The Saviour hinted at these same people when he said: “Let the little children come to me.”

FRAGMENT 115

For Josephus records that not even the mountains saved those who fled. There, then, they dragged us away and seized us; that is, they were kindled against us for judgment. The verse could also be understood of the apostles, whose “youth was renewed like an eagle’s.”

FRAGMENT 116

116a Lamentations 4:20. Some have said that in the select passages [or: “Excerpts”] he laments Josiah more clearly. They hoped that through Josiah’s godliness Jerusalem would be raised up in the midst of the nations for glory, for Jerusalem is in the midst of the nations. This man, they say, is a type of Christ, since he died because of the lawless acts of the people. Yet he was not

caught up in the corruptions of the people. Rather, although the prophet had forbidden it, he met Necho Pharaoh, who did not even wish to fight him. Now according to the divine apostle, “a veil lies over the face of the Jews when it is read; but if one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away; and the Lord is the Spirit.” Through the prophet he calls the Lord “spirit.” So those over whom the veil lies could not say, “The Spirit of our face, Christ the Lord.” Only those could say it who “with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror,” those for whom the Lord is always before the eyes of the mind. So it is clear that the Spirit who worked in the prophets was Christ. When he became man he said, “I am present, the very one who speaks,” being himself Spirit and Lord and Christ. This is the one they seized, those who had first corrupted in themselves the seeds of godliness. But we, the prophets, do not think that the Spirit of our face is anyone else. After our seizure we no longer have a place among them, and we will live under the shadow of Christ. We will live no longer among the Jews but among all the nations, when “the kingdom of God was taken away from them” because of their daring deed against Christ and “was given to the nations.” For look, the prophets are alive, speaking about him and proclaiming him. But they are no longer alive among those who even now wrap him in their own corruptions and blaspheme him day after day.

116b Aquila said “the spirit of our nostrils,” and Symmachus “the breath of our nostrils.” For those who love God breathe Christ continually, keeping him before their eyes. It should be noted that, just as Christ, being Spirit, spoke in the prophets, so also did the Father. Paul says in the letter to the Hebrews, “God, having spoken long ago in many parts and in many ways in the prophets, in these last days spoke to us in a Son.” So also did the Holy Spirit. The Savior says, “The Holy Spirit spoke well in Isaiah: ‘You will hear with your ears, and you will not understand.’” And in the letter to the Corinthians, after listing the gifts, among which is prophecy, Paul says, “One and the same Spirit works all these things, supplying to each one as he wills.” That is, he does so with his own authority, not as a servant. You could also say that the “Spirit of our face” is Christ, who gave us the spirit of prophecy. For this is the face of the prophets; the Spirit is the gift; and the shadow is the law, for the law has “a shadow of the good things to come.” So the prophets lived in us, and also in the shadow of the law. The prophetic gift, then, to which the outcome of all prophecy looks, is Christ; that is, it is from Christ.

For “Christ is the end of the law and the prophets.” It could also be said in the person of the apostles and believers, “In him we live and move and are.” So when we said, “We shall live in his shadow,” it means by imitation of him. For the divine apostle says, “Become imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

FRAGMENT 117

Lamentations 4:21. The word is addressed to those from Edom and Esau, the brother of Jacob. It announces to them in advance an excess of evils, for this is the meaning of “you will be drunk and pour yourself out.” David also speaks about them: “Remember, Lord, the sons of Edom, on the day of Jerusalem, who said, ‘Empty it, empty it, down to its foundation.’” Though they were brothers and neighbors, they kept the hatred of their forefathers. Having spoken about Christ for a time, he recalled this too. For Christ was going to lay waste the one called “earthly,” and to make a heavenly one. Virtue and knowledge are threatening toward those who delight in errors and passions. For them, drunkenness is the deadening of the flesh, and the pouring out is also the putting to death of its way of thinking.

FRAGMENT 118

Lamentations 4:22. “You have paid a sufficient penalty; in it Edom will [take over].” The words “he will not go on to carry you into exile” may refer to the recall from exile. The sense would be: you will not stay in captivity, because you have filled up the full measure. God reduces the penalty; he does not add to it. Or, if it was said of a second capture, as one that would not happen, how did the later capture by the Romans take place? Perhaps, then, the word is about the last capture, the one that came because of Christ, after which there was no other. “And all Israel will be saved” after the fullness of the [text incomplete: Gentiles?], when Israel has left lawlessness behind. After that comes the end, with the punishment of the earthly-minded, since judgment awaits them. The word could also be spoken to the church, which is the daughter of the old synagogue. “For the gifts of God are irrevocable.” The church’s lawlessness has come to an end through divine baptism. He no longer hands her over to her enemies, the one who said, “Here I will dwell, for I have chosen it,” and “Behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age.” At that time he also put on public record the ungodliness of those who set their minds on earthly things.

FRAGMENT 119

From the chain on the Octateuch. Origen, on the same passage, from the books on Lamentations. "For who [pursues] what is just, and not justly?" Once we have settled that point, we will easily move on to this one: it is possible to pursue what is unjust justly. Here is the explanation of pursuing the just justly. It is when the thing done is fitting and is carried out from a sound disposition. Joseph is recorded as having practiced self-control in this way, for no other reason than to do it rightly for its own sake. The meaning of pursuing the just unjustly is this. A person carries out what is fitting, but with a wicked purpose. For example, someone who hunts for glory among men shares his possessions with the poor. The Savior forbids this when he says: "When you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men." Doing what is unjust justly may be understood like this. A person chooses on purpose to do what is better, but through ignorance of what is good he does what is worse. Such was Paul at one time, when he persecuted the churches out of zeal for godliness. Doing what is unjust unjustly is when the thing done is unjust and the choice behind it is evil-doing.

Fragments of the Homilies on Job

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 230–250

Origen's homilies and commentary on Job are lost, apart from fragments quoted in Greek catenae on Job. These are the fragments the editors attribute to him, in two groups. As in any catena, a fragment may be shortened by the compiler, and attribution is sometimes uncertain.

PART 1: THE CATENA FRAGMENTS

FRAGMENT 1

¹⁰ Verse 10: "Have you not fenced in what is outside him?" How do you know that he has been fenced in? This is our adversary the devil, who "goes about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." So he came after Job too, wanting to do the same things. Later, when he received permission, he did them. He also understood that everything had been fenced around, because he had been prevented from doing what he wanted to Job. So he said, "You have fenced in what is inside him and what is outside him." Everything, then, as far as it is not given over to the devil, you have fenced in. ¹⁸ Verse 18: While this man was still speaking, another messenger came, saying to Job: "While your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking, at the house of their oldest brother, ¹⁹ Verse 19: "suddenly a great wind came from the desert and struck the four corners of the house, and the house fell on your children, and they died. I alone have escaped, and I have come to tell you." So he caused the camels to fall into the hands of the horsemen, and the donkeys and the yokes of oxen into the hands of those taking captives. But the sheep he hated, and for this reason he brought fire down on them. He also plotted against the sons, and he was looking for an opportunity to destroy them. If he had found them reading, he would not have touched the house, and he would have had no ground for killing them. If he had found them praying, he could have done nothing against them. But when he found an

opportunity, he had power. What was the opportunity? It was drunkenness; it was a drinking party. Notice that the wind touched the corners of the house: it is in the broad places at the corners that the hypocrites stand and pray. Everyone who has not set foot on the straight way uses the corners. A broad corner is abundant and unrestrained wickedness.

FRAGMENT 2

² Verse 2: And the Lord said to the devil, "Where do you come from?" God was watching how Satan, put to shame, was laboring. When he questions someone and sees him behaving without conscience, then he convicts the wrongdoer, as he convicted Cain. ^{9a} Verse 9: When time had passed, his wife said to him. Notice the villainy. When a long time has gone by, then he attacks, for it is then above all that strength fails. The weakness was double: the one enduring had become weaker through the length of time, and hope had been more fully given up. And a little later: Let us not look at the fact that she is a woman, but at what she advises. This is what I urge on people today as well: do not look at the standing of the persons, but at the manner of the counsel. A wife is there to help, not to trip her husband up. Verse 9: His wife said to him, "How long will you endure?" The devil brings forward last the strongest of all the schemes that came before. If only you had taken her too! If only you had buried her with the children! Some say that these words are not even the wife's, but that he himself, taking on her likeness, spoke them. For Job's wife could not have been like this, unless someone says that she was overturned by disaster and became like this. And a little later: It is likely that this was not the first such counsel, but that many times she had said many things harsher than this.

^{9b} Notice the devil's deceit. He had Eve in mind. This, he says, brought down the first man; this will be able to overcome this man too. But you wretched, foolish one! When she found that man overcome by his belly, she sowed her own poison. But this man you see practicing philosophy and having risen above nature itself. Neither the loss of his wealth, nor the untimely death of his children, nor the torment of a body without relief, nor so great a length of time bent him. And do you expect to overpower with words the man who was not taken by events? From the same author: Why do you weaken the athlete? Why do you hold back his hands? You ought to say, as the Apostle did, "A little longer, a little longer." Verse 9: "But say a word to the Lord, and die." After describing the tragedy in full, then he brings in the

shameless counsel. And he did not even say to him openly, “Blaspheme.” Those who give evil advice do not dare to present the counsel uncovered. What are you saying, woman? When he ought to be appeased, when he ought to be reconciled, are you urging him to provoke him all the more? If God did these things, one should entreat him, not blaspheme. But how is it clear that I will die even as one loved? Still, notice how the woman regarded blasphemy: as though she thought it enough to bring death at once.

^{10a} (Verse 10) “If we received good things from the Lord’s hand, shall we not endure the bad?” This blessed man was struck from every side, yet he stood more firmly, and though he took countless arrows he did not give way. He emptied the devil’s quiver, and he himself did not fall or get tripped up. Like an excellent helmsman, he was not sunk when the sea raged and the waves rose, and he did not grow careless when it was calm. In each change of circumstances he kept his skill the same. Wealth did not puff him up, and poverty did not humble him. When affairs flowed along smoothly he was not slack and lying back, and when almost his whole household was overturned and destroyed, he was not thrown into confusion, nor did he show his courage to be false. Let the rich hear this, and let the poor hear it. The story is useful to both, and the account profits all people, those who are prospering and those who are in misfortune. For this champion of godliness, crowned before the whole world, handled both kinds of weapons and set up his trophy in both. When the demon came against him with every kind of warfare, he took his stand against all of it and was proclaimed victor in every part. He was like a noble soldier who knows how to fight by night, to attack walls, to fight on foot and at sea, to shoot the bow, to wield the spear, and to overcome the enemy with slings and javelins and every manner of battle, and so to prevail everywhere. In the same way that noble man bore every trial with great courage: the trial of poverty, of hunger, of disease, of pain, of the loss of his children, of friends, of enemies, of his wife, and of his servants. There was no human misfortune that was not poured out on his body. Yet he rose above all the nets, and became higher than the devil’s reeds.

^{10b} What is more wonderful still is that all of it came on him, all of it in the extreme, and all of it at once. Do not look only at how much he suffered. Add that it did not come little by little, nor with gaps between, but all together and in one stroke. That is no small addition to his trials. For first, no other man would be found who endured everything at the same time. If one

wrestles with poverty, he still enjoys health. If he is pierced through with both poverty and disease, he has often had a wife to comfort him in his troubles, a harbor for him. If he did not have such a wife, at least she did not give him such deadly advice. If she did, at least he did not lose all his children together. If he lost them together, at least not by such a kind of death. If by such a death, at least he had friends to console him. If he had no friends to console him, at least they did not trample on him as well. If they did trample on him, at least he did not have servants reproaching him. If they reproached him, at least they did not spit in his face. If they spat in his face, at least he was not pierced through with such a disease; he enjoyed a room and a shelter, and he did not sit on the dung heap. And if he did sit on the dung heap, if he had no one to stretch out a hand to him, at least [the text breaks off here and is corrupt]. (Verse 11) “Each came from his own country to him: Eliphaz the king of the Temanites, Baldad the ruler of the Sauchites, Sophar the king of the Minaeans.” Your coming is friendly, and your advice is friendly. Eliphaz: “God has scattered me,” or “my God’s contempt.” The-man: “their failing.” Sophar: “watchtower,” or “contempt.” Baldad: “growing old,” and “glorious.” Sauchaeans: “their idle talk.”

¹¹ Verse 11. “When his three friends heard all the evils that had come upon him, each one came from his own country to him.” Someone may ask why the friends came after so long a time. Let him consider first that they lived in different countries. After a long while many people may have heard the news, but the strangeness of the disaster made it seem unbelievable, that Job should be sitting on a dung heap with no one to help him. So they waited to confirm the report through several witnesses, or even to send someone to see whether what was being said was true. In these matters time passed. Besides this, when they learned the truth, they were kings who were about to travel abroad. They first had to put their households in good order and set others over their subjects in their place. All this occupied them and caused delay. And unless they had been very devoted and righteous men, they would not have left their own lands and kingdoms to come and visit him, but would have met the need through others. One can also think that the delay of their arrival was part of a divine plan. For the whole contest was resolved together with the friends’ discussion: God gave his verdict, recovered the righteous man and crowned him. So it was a divine arrangement that the friends were delayed, so that the illness would be prolonged, and the righteous man, hav-

ing contended all the more, would be declared righteous by God with greater justice. Verse 11. "And they came to him together, to comfort him and to visit him." Symmachus rendered it thus: "For they agreed together to come and sympathize with him and console him." Notice from this too that further time passed, until they sent messages to one another and made their meeting and arrival together.

¹² Verse 12. "And they sprinkled earth on their heads." ¹³ Verse 13. "They sat with him seven days and seven nights." The Scripture did not say that they sat with him seven days from morning until evening, nor seven nights from evening until morning. So it is clear that they sat with him for most of the day, but withdrew at times to attend to necessary needs. Then they came back and sat with him far into the night, and going away again, returned to him at dawn. This is the mark of the most genuine and sympathetic friends. But Scripture, using common manner of speech, simply said: "They sat with him seven days and seven nights." So too when it says that Jacob served fourteen years and was scorched by the heat of the day and the frost of the night, did he never go under a roof? Did he get no rest at all in all that time? To pick at such things is nonsense. For, as I said, Scripture uses common manner of speech. But some people mock Scripture and from this too they ridicule it as false. "How," they say, "could they have gone on without food and without sleep for so many days?" [The Greek of the last sentence is garbled; its sense seems to be: "We were forced to be dragged along with their ill-timed difficulty."]

FRAGMENT 3

^{1a} With this the second chapter is finished. As we look ahead to the third, we say this: the righteous man does feel pain, and no one could deny it. Virtue does not belong to people who feel nothing. It belongs to those who keep their wisdom in the midst of suffering. On the surface, he cannot help being stung most sharply by the blow in his flesh. In the deeper sense, he is a righteous man who loves God, and he sees some people stumbling over his sufferings, as though God's glory were being slandered through him if the righteous man has to endure such things. For when he says, "Why have you set me as a target for your attack?", he was not speaking against God, God forbid! Against whom would he have made his plea? What he means is this: "Why, Master, is your name blasphemed because of me?" He is troubled all the same and dizzy with fear that he may have suffered a still deeper abandonment by

God. A soul that loves God is not punished by anything so much as by the suspicion that God has forsaken it. Ten thousand times over it would choose death rather than be counted among the living with such pain and such a suspicion. At the loss of his possessions and the sudden death of his children, we heard what words of thanks he uttered. We heard how he instructed his wife when she thought something unworthy about the Master, and what he said after the trial, the contempt and the bitter suffering, and how none of the misfortunes of men shook him. But when his friends arrived, righteous and sympathetic men, he thought the time was right. He saw their patience and their love toward him, and so he spoke and made public the pains of his soul. He speaks, however, in a way that carries no danger.

^{1b} For the devil had one aim: to bring the righteous man to blaspheme God. Job clearly did not do this. Rather, he spoke well of God and sent up words of thanks. He does curse the day of his birth and long for death, for the reasons given above. But in the deeper sense he speaks mysteries. He reflects on things that have already happened, and he assures us of what is to come. Such are always the sayings of the holy prophets. Now that we have come to the words themselves, let us make their meaning clear, with him guiding us to the interpretation, the one who also strengthened holy Job for his struggles. ² Verse 1: "After this Job opened his mouth." When a righteous man opens his mouth, we should not listen to what is said in a casual way, but should look for the benefit that comes from his words. For such sayings of the saints are always full of benefit, and a righteous man who opens his mouth brings hidden treasures into public view. That is why Paul, the chosen vessel, writes: "My mouth is opened to you, Corinthians." And it is written of the Lord that "he opened his mouth and taught." Only the one who has first learned the measures of silence is rightly said to open his mouth. So Job also opens his mouth "after this." That is, after the great victory and after those sufferings, he does not speak without testing his words, as one racked with pain in the body whose tongue runs ahead of the lawful bounds of good sense. He shows his self-control even in his words. The statement that he opened his mouth shows both the calm of his soul and the fitness of his words.

FRAGMENT 19

¹ "How long will you wear out my soul?" Heavy loads laid on animals make the animals that carry them grow weary. In the same way there are heavy

words, and a man who hears them grows weary as if crushed under a weight. The other two who came with Baldad spoke words that were not good, harsh, or meant as abuse. Job felt the force of those words like a heavy burden. Worn out in soul by what they said, he says, "How long will you wear out my soul?" And a little later: You see how the tyrant of the Sauchaeans was described earlier. His words are tyrannical, and when Job heard them he said, "How long will you wear out my soul?" Nothing else strikes a person's soul as a harsh word does. Many a man who has endured tortures inflicted on his body has not endured words. Yet the perfect athlete, though weary, still bears harsh words, for it belongs to a great man to bear insult. So the Apostle, listing his brave deeds, says: "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we encourage. We have become like the refuse of the world, the scum of all things, to this very day." And a little later he speaks again, because of the words "How long will you wear out my soul?" Do you see? This is Job, whose book contains nothing else so distinctive as his courage and his endurance. Even so, he feels the weariness he has suffered from the harsh speech of those who came to look in on him.

³ "Only know that the Lord made me thus." Do not suppose that what you see happening to me has come from anywhere other than God. So be afraid. The one who brings these things on me is able to bring them on you also. "You speak against me; without shame you press upon me." Often a person speaks against another while he himself is doing wrong. When he does not blush, he says it to the man's face. He does not do it to rebuke him or to tell the truth. He does it to reproach and insult him. One must not trample on those whom God is punishing. One should grieve over them and fear.

⁴ "Yes indeed, in truth I have gone astray, and error lodges with me, so that I spoke a word I should not have." Then he says it as a supposition: I grant you, [as if conceding the point], that I suffer because of these sins. Even so, was it right for you to reproach me like this? "Error lodges with me." Suppose I really had done such things as I should not have done. Suppose I really were such a man. Ought you not, when you see the scourgings, the festering matter, the worms, and the loss of my possessions, to feel shame? But you trample on me further. You neither pity me nor sympathize with me in my plight.

⁵ "But enough, for you magnify yourselves over me, and leap upon me with reproach." You do not reproach me in moderation. You leap upon me. You reproach me as men who stand on me and trample me down. ⁶ "And he

has raised his fortress against me.” It is as though I am under the wall of my circumstances, a fortress I cannot flee. I must stay there until God decides to tear it down. ⁷ “Behold, I laugh at the reproach, and I will not speak.” This is the saying, “Overcome evil with good.” From the same author: Behold, I am thought to be laughing at your reproach, not to be speaking.

FRAGMENT 20

⁶ “If his gifts go up to heaven, and his sacrifice touches the clouds.” This is about the ungodly man. Suppose his gifts go up to heaven, suppose he is greatly exalted, suppose his sacrifice touches the clouds. When the heretic prays, when his sacrifice rises up with lofty speech, when he seems to be firmly established, then he will perish utterly. His prayer is counted against him as sin, and that very prayer of his is sin. ⁷ “For when he seems already to be established, then he will perish utterly.” Compare: “But the enemies of the Lord, as soon as they were glorified and exalted, vanished like smoke.” “Those who saw him will say, ‘Where is he?’” Who are those who saw him? The churchmen, who saw the failings of those men, will say, “Where is he?” “Like a dream that has flown away, he will not be found.” Such people dream. They fashion phantoms and do not set their minds on the truth, and so they stumble. They become like a dream that has flown away, which will not be found.

¹⁰ Verse 10: “May the lesser ones destroy his sons.” These are the sons and disciples of the one who taught these things. Verse 10: “May his hands kindle pains.” His hands, he says, that is, his deeds, will kindle punishment for him. “His hands”: this is said of the impious and mistaken man whose prayer is counted as sin. If his sacrifice goes up to heaven and touches the clouds, then he is destroyed in the end. His hands will kindle pains for him, that is, he will pass his life in the last extremes of pain. And he says this about the sons of the lawless man. ¹³ Verse 13: “The gall of an asp is in his belly.” For he has lessons that are not sweet but are the gall of an asp, evil as it were, [this being the teaching] about the wine of their instruction. “For their vine is from the vine of Sodom,” and so on. And a little later: the gall of an asp is in the belly of the man of different doctrine, who is impious in his teachings, which are opposed to the truth.

¹⁵ Verse 15: “Wealth gathered unjustly will be vomited up.” What other wealth is gathered unjustly than the wealth in their words? For it is gathered unjustly. But the Good One will not leave them fallen, always holding in

themselves wealth that was unjustly gathered. He will make them vomit it up. Verse 15: "An angel will drag him out of his house." By the working and kindness of God an angel will drag him out of that badly built house itself, which is the church of the evildoers. For this is his house. But an angel will drag him out of his house. ¹⁷ Verse 17: "May he not see the milking of the grazing flocks." The man of different doctrine does not see the milking of the grazing flocks. The grazing flocks are certain souls that feed under the good Shepherd, who said: "I am the door. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved. And he will go in and go out and find pasture."

¹⁸ Verse 18: "Like a tough herb, unchewed, not to be swallowed." Their words and teachings are tough and dense; those things that are done against God have nothing sweet in them. The "tough herb" is a certain plant that grows rough on the tongue of the one chewing it. Just as, he says, no matter how hard someone struggles, grinding that plant with his teeth, he cannot swallow it, so also the one who wants to enjoy what belongs to others will carry off no profit from his labors. ²⁰ Verse 20: "Therefore his good things will not bloom." The things he seems to do as good will not flourish. When he seems already to be filled full, he will be crushed. Verse 20: "There will be no salvation for him in his possessions." His possessions cannot secure salvation for him. Otherwise: ²² Verse 22: "Every necessity will come upon him, and he will send upon him a fury of wrath." Verse 22: "Every necessity will come upon him." These words are meant to urge us to keep away from what belongs to others. Verse 22: "Let it snow pains upon him." Instead of snow, pains come upon such a man.

²⁴ Verse 24: "And he will not be saved from the hand of iron." He does not mean this iron that we perceive with the senses, but a most cutting word. ²⁵ Verse 25: "May an arrow pass through his body." These fiery arrows wound him. Verse 25: "An unkindled fire will devour him." Here we learn a mystery about the punishment laid up for sinners, so that we may guard against suffering it. He said that an unkindled fire will devour the impious man. The material fire we know is not an "unkindled" fire, for it is seen. But that fire is invisible, the fire that comes upon sinners and burns them from within. It is perceived by the mind, and it punishes. If you want to take an image of that fire, think of someone burning with an extreme fever, inflamed as if by fire. You will not find the fire in him by sight, yet it lies underneath and sets his inner parts ablaze. In the same way a person, fevered by his sins, is burned up.

Verse 25: “May a newcomer mistreat his house.” The one who made war on that people was a newcomer, not a proselyte. He mistreated their house by destroying what was thought to be a holy place, and the city which they said was holy.

²⁷ Verse 27: “May heaven uncover his lawless deeds.” This means: the terrors will stand against him both from God and from heaven. He said this because Job, who said he had been struck by God, also recalled that he had been wronged by men. So he argues that everything was brought on him because of sin. The very earth rises up against that people. ²⁹ Verse 29: “And the possession of his goods is from the overseer [bishop].” Here we learn who the overseer is. He is called an overseer because God himself is called Overseer, and the bishops, the good and noble ones, strive in every way to bear his image. A man who copies a royal portrait is honored for copying it well, and he is honored also for having adorned it. In the same way, blessed is the bishop who has understood the true Overseer, and who zealously imitates him and becomes like a god among men. Or blessed is the one who has as his own overseer the one who truly makes him a bishop in Christ Jesus. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

FRAGMENT 21

⁵ Verse 5: “Look at me and be astonished.” You claim to be wise, and to know why I suffer these things, as though God were asleep to the sins of men. And you have dared to call me a sinner, and to say that I have justly come to this.

⁷ Verse 7: “They have grown old even in wealth.” They are not newly rich. They have been wealthy for many years, and they keep increasing their wealth. ⁸ Verse 8: “Their seed is according to the soul.” The righteous man’s seed is according to the spirit: “for he sows to the Spirit, and from the Spirit he reaps eternal life.” But since the soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit (for they are foolishness to him), the seed of such people is not according to the spirit but according to the soul, the lower thing. “And their children are before their eyes.” Everything they do, they do to be seen by men. For a person’s children are his works. The children of those who hold other teachings are not in the heart, among good thoughts, but in the eyes, to be seen by men.

⁹ Verse 9: “Their houses prosper.” When you enter a gathering of heretics and see a crowd assembled there, notice that “their houses prosper.” “And there is no fear anywhere.” They are without fear. They do not fear God;

they despise the Godhead. They say such things about God and are not afraid, though they are speaking about God. "And there is no scourge from the Lord upon them." The same author: If you see a man speaking such things against God, healthy in body, seeing well, with his senses intact, and sometimes even seeming to prosper in worldly matters, observe that in this ungodly man the saying has been fulfilled: "And there is no scourge from the Lord upon them." ¹⁰ Verse 10: "Their cow did not miscarry." The same author: The ox is an animal of farming, and works together with the farmer. These people also farm. Sodom and Gomorrah are farmed, and Egypt is farmed. "Their cow did not miscarry," but it bore and gave birth to a calf, so that their wicked land might be farmed. "She was kept safe in their womb, carrying, and did not fail." Whatever they conceive, they also bring to term. They do not conceive from the fear of God but from wickedness. "Behold, he travailed with injustice, conceived trouble, and gave birth to lawlessness."

¹¹ Verse 11: "They remain like eternal sheep." What is the meaning of "they will remain like eternal sheep"? Of those sheep Christ says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eternal life," and so on. These are the eternal sheep. Now since those who hold other teachings are mimics, and want to imitate the flock of Christ by ordaining for themselves bishops, presbyters, deacons, teachers, a laity, and catechumens, imitating the eternal sheep, they fulfill the words, "They remain like eternal sheep." But they are not eternal sheep; they only remain like eternal sheep. "And their little ones play."

¹² Verse 12: "Taking up the psaltery and the lyre." Our people take up the psaltery and the lyre, singing hymns to God and giving him glory. But their children, the foolish ones among them, play, taking up the psaltery and the lyre. When they take up the words of the Old Testament, they play, and laugh at the sayings of the law and the prophets. They take up the harmonious instruments, the psaltery of the law and the lyre of the prophets, and make sport of them. "And they rejoice at the sound of a psalm." They too recite the psalms of Valentinus and the odes of Basilides, and utter other such things, rejoicing at the sound of a psalm.

¹³ Verse 13: "And they fell asleep in the rest of Hades." They fell asleep in the rest not of heaven but of Hades. But we pray that we may not fall asleep in the rest of Hades, but in the rest of God, in the holy heavens, with Christ who reigns over us. To him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

FRAGMENT 22

²Verse 2. “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?” What the Holy Spirit arranges deserves to be written down. It is written down so that the reader may be helped by what he reads. So if the words of the three men who came to Job were not useful, so that the reader could take something from what they said to Job, providence would not have caused the words of the three to be recorded in the book of Job. It is possible, then, to be helped by their words, by looking closely at the teachings in them. But we should see that the fault in their words lies in one thing only: they accuse Job, supposing that he suffers because of sins he has committed. They do not see that there are many other causes of what happens to people. Such things are reckoned good or hard, or whatever else one wishes to call them. And after a little: “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?” The teaching is sound: a human being cannot be the true teacher of virtue. For it is written in the Psalms too that the one who teaches man knowledge is none other than God. And the prophet says, “Teach me your statutes,” knowing that God is the true and perfect teacher. God teaches by shining into the soul of the one who learns from him, and by lighting up the mind with the light, his true Word. So then, righteous men also teach us, having received the grace of teaching.

⁴Verse 4. “And he will enter into judgment with you.” God takes account of the one he looks after, and so he reproves him. “And he will enter into judgment with you.” We have often said, whenever this teaching has come up in other words, that God is so kind to humankind that even when he judges us with goodness, he allows us to speak to him about whatever we wish, as though he were being judged along with us. So I used the words from Isaiah: “Come, and let us reason together, says the Lord.” For “let us reason together” means this: If you have anything to charge me with, and my providence, as though I had neglected you, as though I had not done what I should, say so. And I will say whatever I have, and persuade you, condemning you as one who deserves to be condemned.

⁵Verse 5. “Is not your wickedness great?” Reasonably I say that he has not become unjust without cause, since he suffers such things as none of them has ever fallen into so severe as you have. It is likely that these things have come on you because of your countless faults. From the same author: He did not name sin first and then wickedness. Rather, he saw wickedness as a bad

settled condition, and after that the sins committed out of that bad condition, which he said were countless sins. Verse 5. "And your sins are countless." Eliphaz supposes this about Job. He knew that Job was rich, and he says: "You took pledges from your brothers, as though they owed when they did not owe." For "you took pledges for nothing" means this. ⁶Verse 6. "You took pledges from your brothers for nothing." From the same author: He adds yet another sin of Job's. Is it ever possible to take a garment? Not from a naked man, but from a rich man who has many clothes laid away. [Text uncertain] Those who took clothing there took it from a man who had many; but this is from a naked man, from a rich man. If, however, someone has only one tunic, and I strip him of that tunic on the pretext of demanding what is mine, without having pity on that naked man, I have taken away the clothing of a naked man. Many such things happen among us when we lend, when we go to our debtors. Often our debtor is extremely poor and cannot repay. And we, shutting up our hearts, become merciless and harsh. We do not see that he is feeding a wife and children, and that he barely feeds them from the few coins he manages to get. Sometimes we demand payment bitterly even though we ourselves have more than enough. So Eliphaz says these things, accusing Job of having taken away the clothing of the naked.

⁷Verse 7. "You gave no water to the thirsty, and you kept bread from the hungry." On the same verse: So not only doing wrong, but also failing to do good, makes a person accountable. All these are accusations, and truly blameworthy things. But they were not true of Job, and it was not rightly said of him. From the same author: Such things happen in bitter demands for payment. Sometimes a person has only one morsel of bread. Even if he does not have a whole loaf, we take it from him, saying, "But you owe."

⁹Verse 9: "You sent widows away empty." Let us take care that if a widow comes into our house, we never send her away empty. Let each one, according to his means and out of what he has, fill the widow's lap. Verse 9: "You mistreated orphans." The same author: We must harm no one, but we ought especially to spare orphans. For God has commanded that he will fight on behalf of souls that have no helper. More than other people, the poor, widows and orphans need help.

¹⁰Verse 10: "Therefore snares have surrounded you." He calls the things that had happened to him "snares." He had fallen into them, and his soul is being trapped by what has happened to him. ¹¹Verse 11: "Your light has

turned into darkness.” You were in the light when you had your possessions, when your children were alive, when your body was healthy. Now you have gone down, as it were, into darkness, into these troubles. On the same verse: That is, into desolation, out in the open air, a wanderer, a fugitive, without a home. Verse 11: “And as you slept, water covered you.” The words “as you slept, water covered you” mean this: the opposing power covered you, since you were not awake and did not [sleep rightly]. Scripture knows of a certain sleep of sin. For this reason it commands us, saying: “Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, so that you may live, like a gazelle from the nets, and like a bird from the snare.”

¹² Verse 12: “Does not the one who dwells on high look on?” But you suppose that God, who dwells on high, does not see what is done. Since he sees everything, he brings down those who are lifted up in mind by a habit of arrogance. Verse 12: “He has humbled those who are carried along by arrogance.” If anyone is carried along by arrogance, and is, so to speak, swept away by an arrogant habit and way of acting, he is humbled by God. So it is likely that, because you also treated widows and orphans arrogantly and took pledges from your brothers for no reason, you have suffered these things and have been humbled. ¹³ Verse 13: “And you said, ‘What does the Mighty One know?’” It is likely that you were saying within yourself, “What does the Mighty One know?” That is, “Can God know everything?” Verse 13: “Or will he judge through the thick darkness?” The same author: But God is able to judge even when he is in the midst of a storm.

¹⁴ Verse 14: “And he walks about the circle of heaven.” God’s providence goes all the way around. “And a multitude of waters will cover you.” ¹⁵ Verse 15: “Will you guard the everlasting path?” Can you keep watch over the everlasting path along which God’s providence travels? Verse 15: “Which righteous men have trodden.” The same author: Righteous men have trodden the everlasting path, for they walk on an everlasting path. Everything they do is set before them with this aim, that they may attain the age to come. Even if they seem to walk just as everyone else does, the soul itself steps onto everlasting paths. ¹⁶ Verse 16: “Who were seized before their time.” Often the righteous die before their time. For the righteous man, brought to perfection in a short time, has fulfilled long years; his soul is virtue in the Lord. Verse 16: “A river flowing over their foundations.” The same author: What are the found-

ations of the righteous like? They are always advancing, always growing in good things.

¹⁸ Verse 18: "But he filled their houses with good things." The same author: He filled the houses of the righteous with good things. I do not understand these as houses of this kind; rather, he filled their houses, those that belong to the governing part of the soul, with good things. What good things? Self-control, righteousness, courage, prudence, the good things that come from works. That is what it means for houses to be filled with good things. ¹⁹ Verse 19: "The blameless man mocked them." Whom? Or the counsel of the ungodly? For example, they want to teach things contrary to the truth, by saying what they say, holding wretched doctrines. The blameless man, seeing these things, mocks them. ²⁰ Verse 20: "And fire will devour their remnant." The same author: What is left over among the ungodly, once the former ones have died, the fire will devour. ²² Verse 22: "And he received a declaration from his mouth." I was asking myself what "declaration" means, and I found in another edition "confession" in its place. So it says rather: Confess your sins; receive instruction from the mouth of God together with confession; and take up his words from your heart. Eliphaz said these things, admonishing Job, as he supposed.

²³ Verse 23: "But if you turn back and humble yourself before the Lord." He admonishes him to turn back, supposing that Job was suffering these things because he had sinned. ²⁴ Verse 24: "And like a torrent [Sophir]." For you, as it were, your speech will be varied and beautiful. ²⁵ Verse 25. "Then the Almighty will be your helper against your enemies." If you submit yourself, if you confess. Verse 25. "And he will give you back purified, like refined silver." Sound doctrine is what has been refined by fire; God does the refining. ²⁶ Verse 26. "Then you will speak boldly before the Lord." From the same author: If you humble yourself and endure what has happened, you will speak boldly before the Lord. You will have confidence, as one who has laid his sins aside. ²⁸ Verse 28. "On your ways you will be safe." From the same author: If you keep the warning I give you, and turn back, and confess. These things were said to Job, but they were not said justly, for he had not sinned. If they are said to us, however, they are said justly. Verse 28. "And he will restore to you a dwelling of righteousness." To put it simply: he says, "He will restore to you every lasting condition that fits a righteous practice, so that your deeds will be bright and honored."

FRAGMENT 23

Verse 2. "His hand has become heavy upon my groaning." Job says: if it were possible for the sentence of punishment to be handed down at once, it would be possible to find him. "If only it were possible," he says, "to stand trial, to meet him, and to learn what he was going to say to me in answer to the things I was going to say." Do you see how he obtained what he prayed for? For this came at the very end of the book. "I wanted to learn what he would say to me, and whether he intended to punish me in the same way." But I said these things not as one condemning him of injustice.

FRAGMENT 24

Verse 6. "Their bread was made sweet for the young." He says it is sweet to the ungodly to feed young men, so that through them they can carry out their acts of spite.

FRAGMENT 27

¹ Verse 2. "As the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way." The devil received authority over Job and tested him night and day: first through outward things, then through his own body, and after that through his friends. When he had tried Job through his wife and Job was not defeated, the devil brought three friends. They were not enemies, and they did not hold hostile teachings. They spoke words of truth, but not rightly and not at the right time. The devil was planning to use these friends to make Job say something against Providence, to act impiously because of his troubles, and to lose heart because of his pains. But look at what the truly brave and enduring man says after the words of the three. Eliphaz finished three speeches and Zophar two. When these were finished and they fell silent, look at how Job answers, after the introduction he has made, which Scripture names in this way. What does he answer? Let us pay attention to the wording.

² Verse 1. And Job went on and added to his introduction, saying: ³ Verse 2. "As the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul," and so on. I know what has stirred you up to provoke me. I swear to you, and I swear by his living Lord, who judged that I should suffer these things, who himself handed me over to these circumstances, who gave authority for me to be examined and tormented by such trials. I swear by the Lord, and I say: the Lord lives, who has judged me in this way, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul. ⁴ Verse 5. "May it

never be that I declare you righteous, until I die.” If we agree with what you say, that you have understood why I have suffered these things, then I would have declared you righteous until I die. Verse 5. “For I will not put away my innocence.” I will not give up paying attention to righteousness. I will always remember to hold fast to it.

⁵ Verse 6. “For I am not conscious of having done anything out of place.” His confidence is great, both about his earlier life and about his conduct during the time of his trial, so that he can say: “I am not conscious of having done anything out of place.”

FRAGMENT 28

¹² Verse 12. “And what is the place of knowledge?” Knowledge is the grasp, by contemplation, of things that stay always the same. Understanding is discernment. ¹⁵ Verse 15. “And silver will not be weighed out as its price.” Nothing is worth as much as wisdom. If you take the silver and the gold in a rather simple sense, Job will say at once that nothing is worth as much as wisdom. ¹⁶ Verse 16. “With precious onyx and sapphire.” Wisdom will not be compared even with precious onyx, nor will it be made equal to sapphire. ¹⁸ Verse 18: “Things on high and gabis will not be remembered.” Neither things on high nor “gadis” are worth as much as wisdom. It seems to refer to things that can be set in order, something like “gigartic” things. Some say that “gabis” is the part that rises above the rim of the grain measure, which is called a “heaped measure” (*kommoulaton*). Verse 18: “And draw wisdom out from beyond the innermost parts.” The innermost parts are around India, or the region beyond it, where the precious stones are. That country brings forth for people these things which the rich consider marvelous. So draw wisdom to yourself from beyond those innermost parts. Or else, “beyond the innermost parts” means the holy, inward mysteries of God, which are utterly unspeakable. Though they are many, draw wisdom to yourself beyond them all.

²¹ Verse 21: “It is hidden from every man.” It is hidden from every man, even if he is a prophet, even if he is an apostle.

FRAGMENT 29

⁶ Verse 6: “When my ways were flowing with butter.” We have said before about Job’s ways, the ones he travelled, that they were virtues. So his ways were flowing with butter: he walked in self-control, and self-control, so to

Speak, flowed out, so that many, even infants, were fed from Job's self-control, from Job's righteousness, from his courage. This is what it means: "When my ways were flowing with butter." Verse 6: "And my mountains were flowing with milk." All the lofty and great thoughts were Job's mountains, which he used to climb. ⁷ Verse 7: "When I went out upright in the city." He devoted himself to teaching and to doing good. He spoke not as a lover of himself but as one who had love, which seeks the common good. ⁹ Verse 9: "Putting a finger on their mouth." The phrase "putting a finger on their mouth" may seem to be a sign of silence. But perhaps it shows something else. Since the hand is taken for works, as we have often shown, they put their work upon their mouth. They perceived, from a small work, that they were not worthy to speak in Job's presence, since he had done greater works.

¹⁰ Verse 10: "And those who heard me called me blessed." Such was he before he was yet tested, that those who heard him called him blessed. They marveled at how he understood and grasped so many things, and was able to help those who listened. Verse 10: "For their tongue stuck to their throat." Of those who heard me and called me blessed for what I said, the tongue stuck to the throat. ¹¹ Verse 11: "For an ear heard, and called me blessed." (The same author.) It is written of Moses that he was afraid to look in the face of God because of the excess of God's brightness. In the same way you could understand that Job's advance in wisdom was so great that those who heard him could not look at the dazzling brightness of his thoughts. Unable to follow the great depth of his mind, they therefore turned their eyes away. This is why he says: Verse 11: "An eye that saw me turned away." Aquila and Symmachus give it as "It bore witness about me." Others have "An eye that saw turned away," meaning "I am not strong enough to speak against him."

¹² Verse 12: "For I rescued the poor man from the hand of the powerful." Let us look at his brave deeds and take them in fully. This verse makes sense according to the letter, and it has much more to give by a higher interpretation. According to the letter, as far as we are able, we ought to help the poor who are oppressed by the powerful. ¹⁵ Verse 15: "A foot to the lame." He gave freely, even to those whose steps were lame, that is, the feet of the soul. By his word he himself became their foot. ¹⁶ Verse 16: "A case that I did not know, I

searched out.” He teaches us how we must judge, if we are ever called to the arbitration of brothers, so as to settle their affairs.

FRAGMENT 32

¹ Verse 1: “And Job ceased with words.” His three friends also fell silent and stopped answering Job any further, for Job was righteous in their sight. He did not cease simply. His heart, which understood divine things, did not cease. For there is already a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be silent and a time to speak. So when it was time to answer the three, he spoke. When the time came, after he had stopped their mouths, he fell silent. And I think the words “Job ceased” are said in praise. ⁷ Verse 7. “So I kept quiet, afraid to tell you my knowledge.” He has knowledge of how people suffer. He knows why people end up in certain troubles in this life alone, and why so many who are unjust prosper. “I saw those who do wrong and break the law, and my feet almost slipped.” If I look only at this life, my steps were almost poured out.

¹⁰ Verse 10. “The long-lived are not the wise.” He says it is not necessary that only the old be wise. One can also hear something noble from the young. For if time makes people wise, much more does God. ¹¹ Verse 18. “For the spirit of my belly was distressing me.” A woman becomes pregnant, and when the child has been formed within her, she comes to labor pains, until she gives birth to what she conceived earlier. Understand that something like this happens in the soul of the one who loves learning. For it conceives the word, and as the word is spoken, it shapes it and gives it form in order. But when, after shaping and forming it, the word has become ready, the soul does not hand it over like an untimely miscarriage, unready and incomplete, but as something brought to fruition and perfected. [So I would say.]

¹⁹ Verse 19. “My belly is like a skin of new wine, boiling, tied shut.” It seems to me that what is in the Gospel was said with this in view: No one puts new wine into old wineskins [the text breaks off here]. ²⁰ Verse 20. “I will speak, so that I may find relief, opening my lips.” A person who finds an understanding listener, and who is full of words, finds relief in speaking, and says, “I will speak, so that I may find relief.” ²² Verse 22. “For I do not know how to admire a face.” I do not have this knowledge, of how to admire a face. Instead I despise human beings, and the shame mortals feel among themselves, and the respect they show one another. Verse 22 continues:

“Otherwise, moths will eat me too.” The moths devour those who accept the faces of men.

FRAGMENT 35

⁶Verse 6. “If you have sinned, what will you do?” If you look up to heaven and consider the clouds, you will understand what you have sinned. What must you do? Go to the high priest and ask him to offer a sacrifice for you. For if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he himself is the propitiation for our sins. Verse 6 continues: “And if you have done many lawless things, what can you do?” You will do something so great: you will undo your many lawless deeds. For this reason, for the incurable cases, which we cannot heal ourselves, Jesus Christ came from heaven to heal the incurable. So it comes about that “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are uncovered.” ⁷Verse 7. “Since then you are righteous, what will you give him?” But if you are righteous before God, what do you have to give on account of your righteousness? And even if you are righteous, as you say, what will you add to him?

¹⁰Verse 10. “He who appoints the night watches.” He goes through the praises of God, and his songs of praise and hymns. The one who appoints the night watches is God himself. I want to see how God appoints night watches. This whole age is night; it is darkness. The light is being kept for you. The light you see now, you see through a mirror. And “in your light we shall see light.” We are going to see it at some point. So the whole age is night, and since it is night there are many wars, and many wild beasts prowl about.

¹¹Verse 11. “He who separates me from the four-footed beasts of the earth.” If you are a sinner, you have not been separated from the four-footed beasts of the earth. For “man, being in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts and became like them.” If you are a sinner, you have not been separated from the four-footed beasts of the earth. Instead it is said to you, “Do not be like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding.” And a little later: If you are a sinner, if you are a fornicator, if you are given to sensual indulgence, you will not be separated from the four-footed beasts. Horses were born mad for the female. Therefore he says with confidence that he has been separated: “He who separates me from the four-footed beasts of the earth.”

FRAGMENT 40

^{3a} Verse 3. “No; gird up your loins like a man. I give you freedom to speak. I will question you, and you answer me.” God is already giving him the prize. He questions a human being, because he asks him and gives him the right to answer. If Job had not won the victory, he would not have received this; if he had not endured, he would not have heard, “Gird up your loins like a man. I will question you, and you answer me.” By the same author: Let no one answer God until he has become a man and girded his loins like a man. As long as his loins are not girded but loose, not tied up or drawn tight, he cannot reasonably answer the Lord. Verse 3. “I will question you, and you answer me.” The full rewards of the struggle are kept for those who have contended well, after this life. Even so, God’s grace already gives the contenders a down payment. So when Job had struggled to the utmost, when he lost his possessions and glorified the one who had given them, when he lost his children and thanked the one who had taken them, when he understood that worms were being brought up out of his body and was still not overcome by his sufferings, God gave him a foretaste and a down payment of the contenders’ reward, speaking to him out of the storm and the clouds. Yet when Job had heard the earlier words, and ought to have answered God, he is silent, as one who has no boldness to answer him. For he did not yet know what Moses wrote later, that Moses spoke and God answered him with a voice. Not knowing this, he is unwilling to answer God.

^{3b} But God gives him freedom to speak. And after other remarks: God’s kindness is so great that he takes on the role of one who is not judging but is himself being judged along with the man. Many passages of Scripture have taught this. “Come, let us reason together,” says the Lord. And, “My people” (or rather, God will reason with the people), “my people, what have I done to you, or how have I troubled you? Answer me,” and so on. Verse 3. “Do not set aside my judgment.” Do not set aside this judgment of mine. Let us remember this saying as a useful one. Whenever God decides that we should suffer something, such as losing a child, losing a ruler, falling ill in body, or enduring anything of that kind, none of it could happen to us unless God judged it so. Not even a sparrow falls into a snare without the will of the Father in heaven. Since none of these things happens apart from God’s judgment, it is said to the sufferer, “Do not set aside my judgment; do not deny that I have judged concerning you.” Verse 3. “Do you think I have dealt

with you for any other reason than that you might be shown to be righteous?" I defend myself to you. You were righteous, but you were not plainly seen to be. You had patience; I had to give an occasion for your patience to shine. You had courage, but it was hidden in you; the hardships that came upon you showed your courage. And after a little: Let us remember this in times of trial, and let us imagine we hear God present with us, saying, "Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might be shown to be righteous?" Let us not be shown to be unrighteous or ungodly.

5 Verse 5. "Take up height and power." Be crowned; put on glory; put on honor. 6 Verse 6. "Send out angels in wrath, and humble every arrogant person." 7 Verse 7. "Put out the proud." The arrogant one took the field against you. He once said to me, "Send out your hand." He said to me, "Touch everything he has." He said to me about you that he would surely bless me to my face. But you have won the victory. So I tell you: Take courage. "Humble every arrogant person," and humble his angels too. He has become proud against you, but you, put out the proud. He is ungodly toward you, but you, strike the ungodly down at once. 8 Verse 8. "Fill their faces with dishonor." Expose sinners by showing them to be sinners. Fill their faces with dishonor through the rebuke that is in you. 10 Verse 10. "But look, there are beasts beside you; he eats grass like oxen." The beasts are the opposing powers. The Prophet prayed about them when he said, "Do not hand over to the beasts the soul that confesses you." The beasts are the opposing powers, and you, O man, have received authority over them. If you serve God, you will tread upon the asp and the basilisk. Verse 10. "But look, there are beasts beside you." By the same author: Beside you, Job; beside everyone who [is mindful]; beside everyone who has conquered. Verse 10. "He eats grass like oxen." He means the worms, which eat him from out of himself. "For [the completion]," he says, "my hand is [under] you; and look, he devours like grass."

11 Verse 11. "But his strength is on the navel of the belly." This is the first power he uses against the man. From here he begins to make a man a fornicator. By the same author: He says this to point to the female, to show that he makes war not only on those who have the seed. He very fittingly named the loin in the case of a male, and the navel of the belly in the case of a woman: "Look, his strength is in his loins, and his power is on the navel of the belly." 25 Verse 25. "The nations of the Phoenicians will divide him up among themselves." The Canaanites, who are also the Phoenicians, are ac-

cused of great wickedness. That is why he says, “The nations of the Phoenicians will divide him up among themselves.” Each one takes some share from the dragon, if his people are Canaanite and Phoenician.

²⁶ Verse 26. “All the ships together will not be able to carry one hide of his tail.” The last parts and extremities of the dragon: all the vessels together cannot put them to death. People, who use their bodies as ships, cannot carry one hide of his tail. By themselves they cannot. But when divine power watches over us, we can carry away not only one hide of his tail but the whole of him, and put the whole of him to death. Each of us, as far as it depends on himself, puts the devil to death, according to what was said by the Apostle: “And may God crush Satan under your feet quickly.”

FRAGMENT 41

⁴ Verse 4. “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” Why did he not say, “Who will uncover his face?” What is the clothing doing here? “For who,” he says, “will uncover the face of his clothing?” To make clear what is said, let us use the example of masks that people put on. They do not appear as what they are, but as what they want to seem. Take, for example, those actors on the stage who put on masks, now of leaders, now of other kings, now of women. Their own face is hidden, and what they are is not seen; what they seem to be is what is seen. The dragon is like this. He never shows his own face. He takes a face to deceive people, and he uses that. This enemy has many masks, and for each vice he puts on the face of a virtue. And a little later, going on: The rest of the verse written above. The face he has put on—who is able to expose it? Who is able to uncover and [discover] what the dragon is inside? There are also others like this, his disciples, “who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inside are ravenous wolves.” Verse 4. “And who could enter into the folds of his breastplate?” Do you see? It is called a breastplate—the chest and breastplate, where the ruling part is. His breastplate is not simple. He has nothing simple. He is crafty; he is folded. So who could enter into the folds of his breastplate? Only a holy person can expose him and show that his breastplate is folded, whereas that of the holy person is not folded.

⁵ Verse 5. “Who will open the doors of his face?” He hides what is stored up inside. So who will open the doors of his face? Who is such a one as to expose and show how much deceit, how much poison, how many evils he has stored away? Verse 5. “Around his teeth is fear.” Of these teeth it is said, “You broke the teeth of sinners,” and, “[The Lord] will break the molars of the

lions” [the text reads “Cyrus”]. This is not the fear of God; it is the fear that is around his teeth. But if you have Christ in yourself, do not worry about this fear. For “you shall fear the Lord your God,” and besides him you shall fear no other. ⁶ Verse 6. “His inner parts are bronze asps [or shields].” These are his doctrines, his hidden thoughts. Everything inside him is the venom of asps. And they are asps [or shields] that are not soft at all, but hard. For asps [or shields] are hard.

¹⁰ Verse 10: “From his mouth.” These are the blasphemies and words of impious and godless teachers. Verse 10: “From his mouth burning torches go out, and hearths of fire are scattered.” I think that all the impious who bring in godless doctrines are properly members of the dragon. And if you want to hear the names of the dragon’s members, who are they? The dragon’s mouth may also be understood in a figurative sense, and beyond that it is the place from which the destroying words come. For from his mouth torches of fire are [destroyed; or perhaps “let loose”]. From his mouth hearths of fire are [destroyed; or “let loose”]. Suppose I hear a speech that accuses the Creator under the pretext of Christianity. Say it upholds the teachings of Marcion, of Valentinus, or of Basilides. They speak evil of the Maker of heaven and earth. They say he does not exist, or that he is not of spiritual substance, as these men claim. Then you will see that from the mouth of such people burning torches go out, and hearths of fire are scattered. Therefore let us, knowing this, guard ourselves. Let the torches not burn us, and let the hearths of fire not touch us.

¹³ Verse 13: “In his neck power makes its lodging.” There is a certain evil power. But the weakness that my Savior and Lord took on for my sake, which is called the weakness of God, defeated that power. For the Apostle says that the weak thing of God is stronger than men. I would say it is stronger than the power of the dragon. ¹⁴ Verse 14: “The flesh of his body is glued together.” He could have said, “The flesh of the body is united.” But he did not say that, for they are not united; that is not the case. What is one in him is in fact many. Or, if things seem to be one, the word “glued together” shows that they are not united. ¹⁵ Verse 15: “His heart is set hard like stone, and it stands like an anvil that cannot be beaten out.” It is not hammered out and does not follow reason. It is [properly] hard, unbeaten, and unyielding. If anyone has drawn power from the devil, from this dragon, he himself has a heart that cannot be beaten out and will not be worked. But if someone

is gold, he follows the word of the goldsmith. He yields in this way until he becomes a thin leaf of gold and receives the impressions of God's letters, in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

FRAGMENT 42

Verse 10: "The Lord gave double what Job had before, to make it twice as much." The noble athlete, the most courageous Job, endured every trial and receives the prizes for his endurance. As Scripture says, he received everything double what he had before. But the Lord Jesus Christ gives prizes that are not double but a hundredfold. For he says, as it is written in Mark: "Whoever leaves father or mother, house, brothers, or sisters for my sake, or for the sake of the Gospel, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life." Job would not have received double what he had before, unless he had shown double the virtue.

PART 2: FRAGMENTS FROM THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPTS

FRAGMENT 1

¹ Chapters 1 and 2. "And that man was true, blameless, righteous, God-fearing, abstaining from every evil thing." For worthless people are false, like those who have a picture painted of God. Fear God and keep the commandments, for this is the whole of man. He is blameless because he is righteous. He is God-fearing, for a good life leads a person to know God, and the knowledge of God becomes the guard of that life. ² Verses 16 and 17: "Fire fell from heaven and burned up the sheep..." "And they surrounded the camels and took them captive..." He caused the camels to come under the horsemen. The donkeys and the oxen, which plowed and worked the earth, he caused to come under those who took them captive. But he hated the sheep, and for that reason he brought fire down from heaven upon the sheep...

FRAGMENT 2

Chapter 2, verse 9: "And when much time had passed, his wife said to him..." Look at the wickedness: when much time had gone by, then he attacks. For then above all the things of hope are put to the test, and then above all the things of strength grow weak. For Job the weakness was double. He himself had become weaker through the length of the time, and his hope was more nearly given up.

FRAGMENT 7

Chapter 7, verse 1. “Is not the life of man upon the earth a time of testing, and his life like that of a hired man who works by the day?” Like hired workers, everyone toils for their own living. The farmer gathers his food in one way, the man who practices a manual trade in another, and those in positions of honor in yet another way. There is simply no one who does not worry about the necessities of life.

FRAGMENT 10

Chapter 10, verse 8. “Your hands shaped me and made me.” The body has been shaped out of a material that already lay at hand, the earth, that is, the woman. The soul, however, has been made with nothing existing beforehand, since it is without body and without parts. I beg you, remember also how cheap and short-lived our nature is.

FRAGMENT 12

Chapter 12, verse 5. “For he was made ready to fall, at an appointed time, at the hands of others.” Here those who believe in fate say, “Look, the Scripture says that it was fated for him to suffer.” But that is not what the Scripture says. God forbid! Our affairs are not under compulsion. Rather, God governs everything that concerns us in due measure, by the principles of his own providence. He knows how far it is good for us to suffer, and he brings on the trials in proportion. Job said this in order to leave the judgment to God. It is almost as if he were saying: “Do not let the righteous be laughed at when they suffer. They suffer only as far as God wishes.”

FRAGMENT 13

¹ Chapter 13, verse 1. “Look, my eye has seen these things, and my ear has heard them, and I know as much as you know, and I am no less understanding than you.” Even if I seem to be younger than you, I am in no way lacking in understanding, least of all in the knowledge of divine things, and I am not at all inferior to you. ²⁸ Verse 28. “He wears out like a wineskin, or like a garment eaten by moths.” Job does not say this according to his own conviction. He says it with regard to the assumption that everyone who is afflicted is enduring this because he has sinned.

FRAGMENT 14

Chapter 14, verse 1. "Or like a flower that has bloomed and fallen off; he has fled away like a shadow, and he will not stand." Like a shadow, a person passes through life and leaves behind no memorial for the living. Here Job makes clear the providence that governs human beings. They do not remain in life by chance or at random, but by the word of God, who does not go beyond the life he has himself appointed. But this should not be said as though fate were in control. Rather, it is the will of God that has arranged each thing by limits and measures.

FRAGMENT 15

Chapter 15, verses 7–8. "What then? Were you the first of mankind to be born? Or were you fixed firm before the sandhills? Have you heard the counsel of the Lord?" That is: Did you come into being before all other human beings, and have you stretched your life out until now, so that you have had experience of more things than others of the same nature? — Theodotion: "where there is a high place, hard to climb, or sandy." — The Hebrew: "You were conceived." — Here he calls the hills "sandhills," as if to say: "Do you know what existed before creation?"

FRAGMENT 16

Chapter 16, verses 18–19. "Earth, do not cover over the blood of my flesh, and let there be no place for my cry. And now, look, my witness is in heaven, and the one who knows my case is in the highest places." In his helplessness he speaks to the earth, and to draw out its sympathy he speaks words that are put as a wish. He says: "Do not keep silent about my affairs, O earth, and do not hide the blood that is being poured out unjustly from my flesh through the running sores. Let it not stop in one place and be hidden, and let the story of my sufferings not pass into oblivion. Let many, he says, be built up through my trials." Or it means: "Let the earth not hide my blood, but call out to God for vengeance, having the very discharges of my body as witnesses. And let the air not hold back my cry, but let the strength of my voice reach heaven, so that God, taking up the cause of the evils done to me and punishing those responsible, may in this way show everyone the blamelessness of the life I have lived." The words "Look, my witness is in heaven" come from a perfectly clean conscience.

FRAGMENT 19

¹ Chapter 19, verse 3. “Only know that the Lord has made me so.” He strikes fear into them, as if to say: “Do not trample on me like this while I am suffering, or you yourselves may fall into the same things, since you have the same nature.” ² “Yes indeed, in truth I have erred. Error lodges with me, so that I speak words I should not, and my words wander, and not at the right time.” “Leave off, because you exalt yourselves over me and leap on me with reproach.” Let it be granted, he says, for the sake of argument, that I have erred. “Error lodges with me”: the error is the devil. What harm comes to you from this, he says, and what need is there to judge me as ungodly and trample on a man who is suffering? You ought to forgive someone who speaks out of pain. Even if I had done things I should not have done, was it right for you to reproach me like this? And I, who have long cared for godliness, ought now to have confidence from my works. But it has not turned out so, and I am judged as a deceiver. He adds here also:

³ “Know then that the Lord is the one who has troubled me; he has raised his fortress against me. Look, I laugh at the reproach, I will not speak. I will cry out, and there is no justice anywhere.” Think about it, he says: it is not without reason that I am in pain, hemmed in by terrors as if by a wall. I speak, he says, with truth, as things stand with me, and you do not accept my words. “In reproach” means: to tell the facts. “I will not speak” means: because you contradict me, I seem to have said nothing. And if I also cry out to God, to bring my case into the open before everyone, I do not obtain my plea. No one hears, no one [judges], I see no one, I have nowhere to go. Should these things not move you to pity? So stop accusing me so rashly, lest God bring you to judgment and exact from you the penalty for senseless boldness. For God does not leave such things unanswered, he says. It will come about, if it is stirred up against you, that your conceit about knowing the good, and the security you feel in what you have, will appear to you useless. A. S.: Why do you say that I suffer these things because I am in wickedness, and that you ought to fear the same? “Hurry, then,” he says, “although the facts bear witness in words. So take hold of [me] in words, so that not even by the truth could one vote [me] free of liability.” [The sense is uncertain.] The Hebrew, at any rate, also has “a sin of speech.”

FRAGMENT 20

¹⁰ “May lesser men destroy his sons, and may his hands kindle [torments].” Even those who were formerly inferior, he says, will take possession of the children of the lawbreaker. ¹⁵ “Wealth gathered unjustly will be vomited up; an angel will drag him out of his house.” The ungodly man does everything to get hold of other people’s goods, and all that he does aims at this. But when he seems to be master of everything, then he will see it all transferred to others. ¹⁸ “Like gristle, not to be chewed, not to be swallowed.” The words and teachings of the [ungodly man] are tough and [like carrion], for the things done against God have nothing sweet in them. ²² “When he seems to be already full, he will be hard pressed, and every distress will come upon him.” He means this: because of the cause, what has been acquired is lost, and it is not handed down to his forebears.

²³ “May he send upon him the fury of wrath; may he [pour] pains upon him.” That is: from God and from heaven he will endure terrible things. He said this because Job, after saying that he had been struck by God, also mentioned that he had been wronged by men. So Zophar argues that everything was brought on Job because of sin. ²⁵ “May stars walk about in his dwellings.” ... For they are in ignorance. They threw the light away from themselves, those to whom he said, “I am the light of the world.” ²⁶ “A fire not kindled will consume him.” As to the hidden meaning, it is a fire that is not kindled. It is either the fire that works through conscience, or the fire laid up in the places of judgment to come. And he says he will be consumed “as by fire” in order to say: he is not counted worthy even of burial.

²⁹ “This is the portion of an ungodly person from the Lord, and the possession of his goods from the overseer.” By this portion God’s judgment is stirred against him. It may be the man of the circumcision who, through Christ, acted impiously toward God; or the man of the unexpected kind; or whoever else is ungodly in whatever way. The portion described belongs to him. — Learn who is called “overseer” (bishop) here. God is called overseer, and the bishops, the good and noble ones, strive in every way to bear his image. A man who copies a royal image is honored for copying it well, and honored also for having adorned it. In the same way a bishop is blessed who has understood the true Overseer, who imitates him and becomes, among men, like God. He has as his Overseer the one who truly makes him a bishop in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

FRAGMENT 21

“Their children play, taking up the psaltery and the harp, and they rejoice at the sound of a psalm.” See, even their foolish children play among themselves. For these people recite the psalms of Valentinus and the odes of Basilides, and they utter other things of that sort, rejoicing at the sound of a psalm.

FRAGMENT 22

¹ “Is it not the Lord who teaches understanding and knowledge?” Let us see what Eliphaz says to the righteous man: “Is it not...” and so on. After Job has said this, Eliphaz agrees with the statement and says: “I also know that God, who alone is wise, knows the reasons by which one man, being ungodly, is set right and another is punished. I also know this: that God, as you yourself said, is the giver of good things, while wickedness brings punishments.” — The doctrine is sound. Knowledge is the contemplation that embraces things that stay always the same; understanding is discernment. ² “Is not your wickedness great, and your sins without number?” So I rightly say that you have not simply become unrighteous, since you suffer things such as none of the wicked suffer. Rather, it was in these matters that you were born; clearly you have had more wickedness than the others [than the wicked]. Wickedness is a bad condition in the soul, such as grief, anger, and unseemly desire; sin is the activity. That is why he named wickedness first, then sin, saying that the one is great and the others countless. I see very many sinners, and none of them has fallen into such misfortunes as you. It is likely that these things have come upon you because of the countless number of your sins and the multitude of your failings.

³ “You took pledges from your brothers for nothing, and you stripped the clothing from the naked.” Let us take heed, we who lend at interest, lest we ever take pledges for nothing. These words are useful, since they speak rightly of sins that really are committed, and are blameworthy among men. Eliphaz assumes this about Job because he knew he was rich and suspected he had grown rich from sources like these. So he says, “You took pledges for nothing,” that is, when nothing was owed you. — But suppose I lent, and not trusting the borrower, took a pledge worth the loan: then I took a pledge, but not for nothing. If, however, I slander him, say he owes me and cannot pay, and demand and take, then I take a pledge for nothing. He then

presses further, thinking Job has committed another sin. One may take garments not from a naked person but from a rich man who has many other garments laid up. In that case [I take] three; of those many I took clothing, and some belonged to a naked person, others to a rich man. But if someone has one tunic, and on the pretext of collecting what is mine I strip him of that tunic, without pity for that naked man, then I have taken away the clothing of the naked. Many such things happen among us when we lend, when we go to our debtors. Often our debtor is extremely poor and cannot repay. We shut up our compassion and become merciless and cruel, not seeing that he feeds a wife and children and barely lives on the few small coins he gets. We demand harshly, sometimes even when we have more than enough ourselves. This is what happens in bitter collections: sometimes a person has one morsel, and even if he has no whole loaf, we take it from him, saying, "But you owe." So Eliphaz says this, accusing Job of having taken away the clothing of the naked.

⁴ Verses 7–9: "You did not give water to the thirsty, but you withheld a morsel from the hungry. You showed admiration for the face of certain people, and you [settled] those on the earth. You sent widows away empty, and you mistreated orphans." So not only doing wrong, but also failing to do good, makes a person accountable. He points out how far we ought to extend kindness, since it is blameworthy not to give drink to the thirsty. We receive a reward for a cup of cold water. So he condemns Job for great harshness, as one who would not give even water, a favor that costs nothing, and to a thirsty man, which makes it worse. "But you withheld a morsel from the hungry." Why do I say, he asks, that you gave nothing to the one in need? You even took away the small comfort of bread from the hungry man. By "morsel" he means a piece of bread, as it is also used in Ruth: "Dip your morsel in the vinegar." "You showed admiration for the face of certain people." That is, you did not give your judgments justly or without partiality, but to please men. You became a respecter of persons. When you sat in judgment, you lifted up some and humbled others, forcing the lowly and admiring and honoring those in positions of power. "You [settled] those on the earth." Some copies have "you made them lie down" in place of "you settled." The sense is: you took away even the poor man's bedding, so that they were forced to sleep on the ground with nothing spread under them... "You sent widows away." Either you stripped them of what they had, or,

worse, when they came to you and asked for charity you gave them nothing, and sent them away having received nothing from you... “You mistreated orphans.” To mistreat orphans, who have no one to help them, is the mark of the utmost wickedness. No one ought to be mistreated, but orphans above all must be spared, for God commanded that he would fight on behalf of those souls who have no helper. The poor, widows and orphans need help more than other people do.

5 Verse 18: “But the counsel of the ungodly is far from him. The righteous saw it and laughed.” What the ungodly plan is far from God. When [the righteous] saw the counsel of the ungodly, they laughed at them. 6 Verse 22: “Take instruction from his mouth, and take up his words into your heart.” I asked myself what the word “exegoria” means. In another edition I found, in Symmachus, “confession” in its place, and in Aquila, “law.” According to the one reading it says: Confess your sins, and learn from God the manner of confession. According to the other: Receive law from God, and make his words a matter of the heart. If you are righteous and worthy, let God dictate to you, and receive divine words in your heart, as Jeremiah later heard: “Behold, I have put my words into your mouth.” Or by “exegoria” he means confession, urging the righteous man to repentance. Or he means this: change your way of life, and take up the divine laws. That is, confess what you have done wrong, and from now on keep the words of God. I got the occasion for this twofold sense from the word “exegoria.”

7 Verse 24: “You will set it on a mound, on a rock, and like the rock of a torrent, Sophir.” You will throw him to the ground, and as it were do him harm.

FRAGMENT 23

Chapter 23, verse 2: “And indeed I know that the reproof is from my hand, and his hand has become heavy upon my groaning.” That is: I carry my accuser around with me; I have the proof of my troubles from my own house. — I know, he says, that you think you bring your reproofs from what is in my hands, that is, from the blow, and not from what I have done. For God has laid himself on me so heavily that I groan. — I know, he says, that people’s judgments come from their deeds. But what was laid on me was beyond my strength, that is, the reproof lies outside anything I did. Verse 6: “And will he come upon me with great strength? Then he will not use

threats against me.” For even if he uses great strength and threats against me, still I know that truth is with him.

Verse 7: “For truth and reproof are from him, and may he bring my judgment out to the end.” This is what he prayed for, and this is what he means: that an end be put to my sufferings. Then he says that he wanted these things to happen so that he might die, not as though he were now about to judge. — Among the Hebrews, “end” and “victory” are signified by one word. 10. “For he already knows my way.” He knows my way, he says, and that I have always been eager to obey him. But when he comes to judge, who will speak against him? 15. “Because of this I am troubled before his face; I will consider, and I will be terrified of him.” I have not sinned, he says, but what of that? God is not permitted to punish only on the strength of sins committed. I say this even apart from any sins.

17. “For I did not know that darkness would come upon me, and a thick gloom has covered me before my face.” This evil, he says, did not come in any way that human reasoning could follow; it was completely unexpected. I suspect the blow is from the hand of God. And he says well, “before my face,” for the darkness is not a common one, but belongs to my own despondency.

FRAGMENT 24

13 Chapter 24, 13. “But why has he not made an inspection of these men, while they are on the earth? And they did not recognize it.” That is, they despised everything and mocked everything. No one wrongs them or does them harm. But he has not yet made an inspection of them. So he will make it after this, and he will examine what they have done wrong, and will not overlook it. “They greedily devoured orphans.” 14. “But when he knew their works, he handed them over to darkness.” That is, having learned their works, or having examined and tested them, that is, having known them.

FRAGMENT 27

Chapter 27, 4. “Nor will my soul practice unrighteous things.” That is, I will stand by the same verdict. No one will be able to turn me aside, no one to strike me down, no one to lead me away from what I have set before me. 5. “May it not be for me to declare you righteous until I die, for I will not put away my blamelessness.” That is, I will not accuse myself, nor will I change my position, even if you say ten thousand things. I will not give up my ver-

dict, even if you think you have put an end to the charge against me. Even if I were to agree with what you say, once you have understood why I have suffered these things, I would be declaring you righteous. I will not cast off my blamelessness by thinking one thing about you and saying another.

10. “When necessity has come upon him, does he have any boldness before him?” What he means is this: the one who does wrong has no boldness, and cannot speak out or say what I am saying now, but is deprived of it and has been silenced. I have not suffered this, but I speak and argue back. The unrighteous are not like this.

FRAGMENT 28

¹ Chapter 28, 1. “For there is a place for silver,” and so on. He means this: the one who has fixed an order among ordinary things has done so much more among human affairs. ² 2, 3. “For iron comes from the earth, and bronze is quarried like stone. He set an order for darkness, and he himself searches out every limit.” This means that he takes thought for affairs and cares about them, and nothing simply or randomly passes him by. Or rather, he means that other matters are plain, but God’s ordering of things is beyond tracing and unknowable. And a little later: He said well, “He set an order for darkness,” showing that he knows how to yield and to withdraw. Who drives away that gloom? Where does such good order come from in such a matter? Then he recounts God’s power, then his wisdom, persuading Job not to want to demand an account from him.

FRAGMENT 29

Chapter 29, 3. “As when his lamp shone over my head, when by his light I walked in darkness.” That he sought his former prosperity for this reason, so that God’s providence might be shown, is clear from his saying, “when God was guarding me.” 4. “When God was making an inspection of my house.” Symmachus has: “When God fenced around my tent.” You see that this is what he longed for: to show God’s oversight and providence. Since I was young, he says, being righteous, I made virtue the material useful to me, for I dealt well with everyone. 7. “When I went out early in the morning in the city, and in the squares my seat was set.” Like a ruler and teacher of virtue, he did not devote himself to sleep and drunkenness, but out of love sat in the squares at dawn, becoming a law and a pattern for those in the city.

13. "May the blessing of one who is perishing come upon me." From Severus, in his letter to the deaconess Julian. In the Gospels the Lord speaks of those who put themselves to death to the world. Some give up their bodies for the contest of martyrdom, and some give them up to the labors of ascetic discipline. In this way they seem to destroy themselves and kill themselves by being deprived of the enjoyment of this life. Of them he says: "Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." So for one who is "perishing" in this way, according to the Savior's word, and who finds his life, the prayer and the blessing are something great. Any sensible person might pray that this blessing come upon him, and would wisely say: "May the blessing, etc." 15. "I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame." Vat. 794, 2. As for the meaning: he opened blind minds, and he owed it to those whose souls were maimed to become their eye himself. To those lame in the steps of the soul he gave feet; by his word he became their foot, and he led each group by the hand. The eye is taken to stand for guidance in understanding, and the foot for guidance in conduct.

16. "I was a father to the powerless." Same source. In these words we are shown the voice of one who helps the powerless, the weak. 16. "And a case that I did not know, I searched out." You see his care as a protector. It went beyond money, beyond food and clothing: he even stood in danger for the sake of another man's fight. 17. "And I broke the molars of the unjust." Note how hard the task was. He says, in effect: from where could it come that I set right a matter that had already been seized? Truly, when Christ came, he crushed the molars of the opposing powers. The Lord broke the molars of the lions, and it is written in the prophet: "From the midst of their teeth I snatched the plunder." 18. "And I said: My age will grow old like the trunk of a palm tree." Notice how much time has passed when he says this. He does not boast or think highly of himself. He is compelled to speak of God's providence, of the things in which he enjoyed it, and of the things in which he now finds himself.

FRAGMENT 30

Chapter 30, 1. "But now the least of men laugh at me; now they admonish me in turn, men whose fathers I used to despise." Vat. 794, 2. He does not say this out of contempt. He knew them clearly, just as the prophet said: "Every evildoer is despised in his sight." Such people he counted as nothing. 2, 3. "Even the strength of their hands, what was it to me? Completion perished

upon them. In want and hunger they were barren, those who fled the waterless land, yesterday's distress and misery." Olympiodorus, Origen. He says: But I never asked for any help from them, so that they might therefore speak such words to me. They were long since in debt to justice, being wicked, and somehow the punishment flew away from them. Or perhaps they longed for death because of extreme poverty and did not obtain it, and not even want taught them sense, so as to become begetters of what is good. They remained barren, those who only yesterday, or a little while ago, had escaped the desert and its calamities. He seems to slander them as base-born, as coming from ignoble stock and from poor fathers. "Completion perished upon them" means: they never accomplished anything good.

4. "Those who go around gathering salt-herb on the echoing ground, whose food was salt-herb." The salt-herb, they say, is a certain plant that quickly fills the one who eats it. "On the echoing ground" means in ravines and rocky places, for such places resound well and echo back to those who speak. Or he may mean by "echoing" a wooded place in which the blowing of the winds, stirring the trees, makes a sound. So he says that, because of their extreme need, these men wandered through the woods, the ravines, and the places beside which running waters sound and murmur. They searched for plants and scraped the roots of trees for food, as a comfort [for hunger]. 4. "Dishonored and despised, lacking every good thing." Vat. 795, 1. It is another wickedness, to be such men even in poverty. 24. "If only I could get control of myself." Vat. 795, 2. You see that when he says "if I could," he does not say it from weakness, but because he is prevented.

28. "I stand in the assembly crying out." Same source. Because of the extremity of his sufferings, he is not even ashamed before a crowded gathering. 29. "I have become a brother of sirens, and a companion of ostriches." Same source. He says: I have fallen into the wildness of birds. I have lost sight of my own nature, and I am in no better condition than they.

FRAGMENT 31

¹ "For I stand in a just balance, and the Lord knows my innocence, if my foot turned aside from the way..." Wonderful precision! No one could say, "I used my wealth and my former good things for carelessness and dissipation, so I am paying this kind of penalty, and I have been changed, since God has applied a fitting remedy." For a man who loves laughter and tripping others up [and has given himself to luxury], it would be reasonable for God to set

the opposite condition against him. He would hand him over to a life of groaning and many tears. But take the man who even before these things avoided revelry and drove away people who play and make jokes. What reason would there be for him to fall into a gloomy, downcast life? Since I was withered and stern, I did not fall into the vices that tear that kind of life apart.

² “And if my maidservants often said, ‘Who will grant us to be filled with his flesh?’ since I was very kind.” That is, to enjoy his life, because I was sweet to them. ³ “A stranger did not lodge outside, and my door was open to everyone who came.” For he did not serve them merely by receiving them. He also gave them provisions for the poverty that would follow.

FRAGMENT 32

¹ “And Job stopped speaking.” Job fell silent, giving them room to speak. But he saw what was happening, called God as witness, and laid a curse on himself, because the friends had been silenced. ¹¹ “For I will speak while you listen, until you have examined my words, and I will understand as far as you are concerned.” Either he means this: that not even when you were refuting me did you refute me as you should have; or that afterward you fell silent. So it stands in relation to the words, “For I will speak while you listen.”

FRAGMENT 33

¹² “For how can you say, ‘I am righteous, and he has not listened to me?’” What then happened? Job did not think this. Elihu supposed it, but Job did not speak with the intention of saying that he was more righteous than God. He meant that these things had been done by him, yet he was not charging God with injustice. Elihu, however, took it that way. But he rightly accused those others, who had [taken up] God’s side and then denied it. ²⁰ “I will speak, so that I may find relief, opening my lips.” A man who has an understanding listener and is full of words finds relief by speaking. He empties himself, as it were, of the excess and throws it off, and says, “I will speak so that I may find relief.”

FRAGMENT 34

¹⁹ “He who is not ashamed before the face of an honored man, nor knows how to give honor to the great.” For even if you do not know, you ought to yield much to him and to his glory, so as not to seek to learn everything.

²³ “For he will no longer lay anything upon a man.” He seems to mean this:

that now good and evil lie in our hands, but in the age to come it will no longer be so. ³¹ “For to the mighty one he says: ‘I have taken, I will not take a pledge; without myself I will see; you show me.’” Some interpreted it this way: no one dares to say to someone stronger, “You have taken my things unjustly. You did not take them as a pledge, as though they were owed, but against my will. Show that you did this with good reason.” But if no one dares to say this to the powerful man, how, he says, can you be so bold against God? Symmachus rendered it this way: “I have taken up a speech before God; I will not [hold back], without hindrance; you make it clear to me.” And he understood it thus: since I have taken up speech on behalf of God, says Elihu, I do not hold back, but go on with my argument without hindrance. And if I am not speaking well, you make it clear, that is, refute the argument. I think, rather, that the text is to be understood like this: it is not because I chose to speak on behalf of God that you must therefore simply agree with me, as if I were demanding a debt. “Without myself I will see; you show me” means: apart from my own argument I want to know whether you have anything to say in reply. So say that I am keeping silent, and take hold of the argument, if you can.

FRAGMENT 35

⁵ “Look up to heaven.” No lover of the world looks up to heaven. Let us not love the world, nor the things in the world. If we love the things down here, we do not look up to heaven. ⁶ “If you sinned, what will you do?” That is, you will not wrong him, and you will not benefit him either, if you are righteous. For since he was saying, “If I sinned, what can I do?”, he asks, “What shall I do?” He says this to make the point: “Why? Is he wronged, so that he worries about you when you sin? Is he suffering some harm?” ¹⁰ “He who appoints night watches.” Do you want to see how God appoints night watches? This whole age is night; it is darkness. The light is being kept for you. The light you see now, you see through a mirror. And it says, “In your light we shall see light”; so we are someday going to see it. Is the whole age, then, night? Since it is night, many enemies and many wild beasts go about. Since the affairs of this life, lived in darkness, are night, there is need of watchmen appointed for this night. These watchmen, who serve through the nights, guard those who are in the night. They come and protect us from robbers. Who, then, are the watchmen appointed by God for the night

watches? "The angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him, and will deliver them." These are the angels who guard us in the night.

FRAGMENT 38

⁵ "Who set its measures, if you know? Or who stretched a line over it?" The Greeks wanted to say something about the measure of the earth. They say the diameter of the earth is 250,000 stadia. But the saying seems to show that the measure of the earth cannot be grasped by anyone. Only the Savior knows it, who is also the Creator. He said "measures," not "measure," to point out the differences within the earth. What is the measure of a land like the East, for example, which produces spices? What is the measure of the land that produces pepper, or of the one that produces animals? For not everything grows everywhere. These measures, then, are with the Word of God. Surely the earth has not become this size by chance or at random. It seems to me that if even the smallest thing were added, it would be out of place, and if anything were taken away, by the same reasoning it would ruin the whole. This is what the measures and the line hint at.

⁶ "And who is he who laid a cornerstone upon it?" Who laid a cornerstone upon it, so that it stands so firmly, as though he had built it on a secure and settled foundation? It is the will of God, for in his hand are all the ends of the earth. "Cornerstone" can also be understood of the only-begotten [Son] of God, who became flesh for us, in keeping with the saying in the Psalms: "The stone which they rejected has become the head of the corner." For he came to earth by the good pleasure of the Father and joined the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, together in himself, just as a cornerstone binds together the two walls. ¹¹ "And I said to it, 'You will come as far as this and you will not go beyond.'" Symmachus has: "Let the swelling of your waves be set as far as here." In the one version he holds the sea securely, as if with bars; in the other he holds it easily, as if by an order. "For I spoke," he says, "and there is no answering back," when this happens with no necessity forcing it, even while great violence and strength lash the sea. For this is why he did not allow it to be calm or gentle: so that it might proclaim the power of God, with its nature fighting against the command and the command winning everywhere. If the water were gentle, many would credit its good order to the nature of water. But now, stirred up, lashed, driven from within, and unable to cross its boundaries, it proclaims the power of God through its turmoil.

⁴¹ “And who has prepared food for the raven?” It is said that ravens do not feed their young. The ravens themselves, being large, naturally find food for themselves. But who feeds the young? Is it not the word of God? As the Gospel also says: “The birds of heaven do not sow or reap, and your heavenly Father feeds them.”

FRAGMENT 39

²⁷ “Is it at your command that the eagle is lifted up? And does the vulture sit on its nest and lodge on a projecting rock and a hidden place?” If among flesh-eating creatures there is [some reasoning wisdom], present in each from natural knowledge, and directed toward knowledge, in some of war, in others of the dead, you also see the vulture, alone, borne along in the air. [The text is uncertain here.] ³⁴ “Why am I still being judged, I who am corrected and who reprove the Lord, when I hear such things and am nothing?” Ibid. “Why,” he says, “am I still being judged?” This is by way of an introduction; from the start he yielded the first place. “I have been defeated,” he says, “the right is yours. Why do you carry the case further? What can I answer? How can anyone face such a Master eye to eye?” “I kept on,” he says, “looking for the reason for the blow that fell on me. But I brought no charge against the creation, and I have nothing to say to what has been said.” — [The text is incomplete here:] the poor man is not reproving the Lord, but is being corrected.

FRAGMENT 40

² “But gird up your loins like a man. I will question you, and you answer me.” Vat. 805, 2. Those who are confident in the abundance of their rights do not even let their opponents run away, so that the victory may be won out of that abundance. Then he also defends himself to Job, saying, “I care about human beings.” From this it is clear why I brought this trial on you. “I give you freedom of speech. I will question you, and you answer me.” ³ “Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might appear righteous?” Vat. 805, 2. He means the present dealing. “I am not saying this in order to condemn you,” he says, “but to show that you are righteous.” Or he is speaking about the trial, using “dealing” for the permission given, that is, that I had arranged beforehand for this to happen for some other purpose. He did not say, “so that you might become righteous” (for you had practiced righteousness strictly), but “so that you might appear so.” Let us not turn out

to be unrighteous or ungodly. Let us remember these things in times of trouble, and let us think we hear God present and saying to us, “Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that your righteousness might become plain to those who do not know it?”

⁵ “Take up height and power, and clothe yourself with glory and honor.” Ibid. “Be crowned, put on glory, put on honor, put on splendor. The insolent man marched out against you, but you humbled the arrogant one and turned his armies back far away in shame. Reprove sinners, showing them to be sinners. Fill their faces with dishonor through the rebuke that is in you.” — So it was not for display [text corrupt: or for all the other things, or also for the knowledge of God]. See how much the lowliness of his own nature convicts him. God does not say, “You are lowly,” but “I am great, and you cannot do what I do.” ¹⁰ “But look, there are wild beasts beside you.” Like an athlete, learn about the dragon, your opponent. — “Beside you, then,” he says, “and beside everyone who is patient, these beasts are tamed and made subject. There is, however, etc.”

²⁰ “Will you draw the dragon out with a hook, and put a muzzle around his nose?” “Can you, then, Job,” he says, “do what the Only-begotten did later? For he put out his own flesh as a kind of bait, and through his own nails, as through hooks, he caught the fish Leviathan. For this is how the Hebrew has it, and it means the dragon.” ²⁷ “Will you lay a hand on him, remembering the war that takes place in his body [and let it happen no more]?” Vat. 806, 2. By “war” he means here the turmoil, the savagery, the attacking of him. “How does it happen?” he says. Such is this wild, powerful, and frenzied beast. “Can you bind him by your own power,” he says, “or even remember and take thought of the war that is going to take place in his body?” By his “body” he means the demons, since the dragon is their head. The Lord won this war by the trophy of the cross. [Then the text adds:] “Let it happen no more,” since the cross happened once for all. For “the one who died to sin,” he says, “died once for all.”

FRAGMENT 41

¹ Chapter 41, verse 4. “Who will uncover the face of his clothing?” Who is able to expose the face of what he has put on? Who is able to uncover and show what the dragon is on the inside? And a little later: I recalled the sacred writings contained in this divinely inspired book of Job. In them, as in a bodily form, the devil is described, the originator of evil among demons and

wicked beings. His great ugliness and the variety of his schemes lie hidden, and so does the stripping away of the outer masks. For it says: "Who will uncover the face of his clothing?" And since the text had been speaking of this variety that appears on the outside, as though it rises from some depth of unseen wickedness, these words are added to what was said: "Who will uncover the face of his clothing?" That is, who is able to enter into the thoughts of his heart, since they are folded up and hidden?

² Verses 24–25 (14–15 in the Greek numbering). "It will not be shaken. His heart is set like a stone, and he stands like an anvil that cannot be beaten." His heart, it says, has turned to stone, and it cannot be beaten out. He is altogether hardened and reckless. He is not driven, he does not follow reason, he does not yield. He is hard, unbeatable, unyielding. And if anyone has drawn power from the devil, he too has the heart of this dragon, unbeatable and not to be driven. But if someone is gold and follows the word, he yields to the goldsmith until he becomes a sheet of gold and receives the impressions of God's letters, in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

FRAGMENT 42

Chapter 42, verse 10. "And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, doubling it." Verse 12. "And the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the former. His livestock were fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen." Verse 13. "And seven sons and three daughters were born to him." If the Lord gave Job double of everything he had before, after the blow, as the sacred writing says, then the children also ought to have been doubled. Look at the livestock. It says he had fourteen thousand sheep, for at the beginning he had seven thousand. He had six thousand camels, for at the beginning he had three thousand. He had a thousand yoke of oxen, for at first there were five hundred. The same holds for the wild donkeys. But it says seven sons and three daughters were born to him, as many as there were before. Yet there ought to have been fourteen sons and six daughters, so that they would be double the children who were lost. So we say this: the sheep and the livestock were lost, but the sons and daughters died; they were not lost. God therefore gave him the same number of other children, so that in the resurrection he would have them doubled. In this way God made him father of twice as many children as he had been father of before. But if the soul were extinguished after death, and the things of the

resurrection were not true, fourteen sons and six daughters would have had to be given. So the Scripture has held faithfully to the fact that he received seven sons. If he had been given fourteen sons and six daughters, while the teaching about the resurrection still stood, the children would not have been given to him double, but triple, compared with what he had at first.

16. "After the plague Job lived one hundred and seventy years, and in all he lived two hundred and forty [eight] years." How are we to understand that Job lived a hundred and seventy years after the plague, when all the years of his life total two hundred and forty-eight? Examining the matter closely, we say this. He received back all his good things doubled. If the years of his earlier prosperity were also received back doubled, then this is how the count should go. He lived seventy-eight years in his earlier prosperity, and from the time he received the plague he remained in suffering for fourteen years. So "after the plague" must be understood not as from the time the plague stopped, but from the time it began. After those fourteen years, the time of his sickness, he lived another one hundred and fifty-six. The years of his earlier prosperity came to seventy-eight, so the doubled time of his later well-being comes to one hundred and fifty-six years. When the fourteen years of the plague are added in front, the total is one hundred and seventy years. So he is found to have lived one hundred and seventy years "after the plague," that is, from the time the plague was brought upon him, as the Scripture says. In this way the doubled repayment of his prosperity is also preserved. To sum up, then, you will count it like this: he lived seventy-eight years in wealth and with fine children; fourteen years in the loss of everything and the ruin of his body; and one hundred and fifty-seven years in his second prosperity. So the whole time of his life is two hundred and forty-eight years, as the sacred book about him says.

17. "And Job died, an old man and full of days. It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up." Aquila and Symmachus, when they came, concluded the book there, supposedly following the Hebrew. But Theodotion concludes in agreement with the Seventy, lacking nothing, neither time nor life. It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises, that is, with the righteous. For "the ungodly," it says, "will not rise in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the righteous." We accept these words too, even if they are not part of the whole fabric of the book, but were woven into it by one of the saints. Still, we accept everything,

since we have received the book in this form from the fathers. 18. “This is translated from the book of the Lord.” Here he calls the Hebrew language “Syriac,” since many people call Judea “Syria” and the Palestinians “Syrians.” The historian Herodotus also says, “The Indians, the Egyptians, the Arabs, and the Syrians in Palestine are circumcised.” This is how they name the Jews.

Selected Notes on the Pentateuch and Other Books

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 230–250

The short Greek remains of Origen's comments on the first books of the Bible and on Job and Ezekiel: the 'Selecta' (selected comments printed in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* under his name) and short annotations gathered from commentary-chains. They are brief, scattered notes rather than complete works, and the attribution of some is uncertain. We found no English translation of these.

SELECTA ON GENESIS

PREFACE

The holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered over the whole world. According to tradition, Thomas received Parthia by lot, Andrew Scythia, and John Asia. John stayed among the people there and died at Ephesus. Peter seems to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. At the end he came to Rome and was crucified head downward, since he himself asked to suffer in this way. What need is there to speak of Paul? He fulfilled the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum, and later was martyred at Rome under Nero.

NOTE 1

² "And God said: Let the earth sprout plant of grass, sowing seed according to kind and according to likeness." We should not pass over the fact that the wording, "God said: Let the earth sprout plant of grass, sowing seed according to kind and according to likeness," might seem to be a grammatical error. "Sowing" does not fit easily with "plant of grass." How then can it be understood without a grammatical error, since most people will suppose that "sowing" is said of "plant of grass"? It is possible to read it with a slight

pause, at a mid-point mark, like this: "Let the earth sprout plant of grass." Then, after the break, add "sowing seed according to kind." So it would be: "Let the earth sprout plant of grass, according to kind sowing seed," with "sowing seed" attached to "kind." ³ "Increase and multiply." Increase means growth in size. Multiplying means succession into a multitude through union.

^{4a} "And God said: Let us make man according to our image and according to likeness." First we must settle where the "according to the image" lies: in the body or in the soul. Let us first look at the arguments of those who hold the first view. Melito is one of them, and he left writings on God having a body. They find that members are ascribed to God: eyes of God looking upon the whole world, and his ears inclined to the petition of the righteous. "The Lord smelled a fragrant aroma." "The mouth of the Lord spoke these things." There are also God's arm, hands, feet and fingers. So they say outright that these teach nothing other than the shape of God. "How," they say, "was God seen by Abraham, and Moses, and the saints, if he had no form? And if he had a form, what character could it be but the human one?" And they collect countless sayings that name members of God. We must contend with them first from the wording. Against those who know nothing beyond the letter, we will set passages that contradict their assumption. From Zechariah: "Seven are the eyes of the Lord that look upon all the earth." But if God has seven eyes and we have two, then we were not made according to his image.

^{4b} Again, we have no wings, but about God it says in the ninety-first psalm, "Under his wings you will hope." If he has wings and we are wingless creatures, then man was not made according to the image of God. And how can the heaven, which is spherical and always in motion, be God's throne, as they suppose? And how is the earth the footstool of his feet? Let them explain it to us. Is the body from the knees to the soles that of the one who contains all that lies between heaven and earth? The earth lies in the middle of the whole universe and is contained by him, as geometrical proofs show. So are God's soles with us, or with those on the opposite side of the earth? Do they fill our whole inhabited world, or take up somewhat more or somewhat less? Are his feet kept apart by the seas and rivers, or do they also tread upon the waters? And how is it that the one whose throne is a heaven so vast, and whose footstool is the earth, is found walking only in paradise, or appears to

Moses only on the summit of Sinai? Whoever holds such opinions about God, will he not be called a fool?

⁵ Then, having said much to overturn such an opinion, he adds:
⁶ Someone who says that “according to the image” is not in the body but in the rational soul will offer a view that should not be despised, once he understands what powers the soul has. The power of knowing in a human being is able to judge and to do good, to act justly and to be strong, and in a word to accomplish every good. These powers were made in him by God according to the image. The Apostle shows clearly in the letter to the Corinthians that actions mark out the image, and not the shape of the body. He says: “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, so let us also bear the image of the heavenly one.” The one who lives according to the flesh and does the works of the flesh bears the image of the earthly. The one who by the Spirit puts to death the actions of the flesh bears the image of the heavenly. In another letter too, when he teaches how one must live, he adds to the commandments: “that you may become according to the image of the one who created [you].” The Lord is patient, and the patient person has the “according to the image of God.” The Lord is righteous and holy, and the Lord is compassionate and merciful. Therefore the one who loves righteousness and holiness, who does and keeps the Savior’s commandment, “Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate,” and “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,” becomes an image of God in every respect.

^{7a} “And rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and all the cattle, and all the earth, and all the reptiles that creep on the earth.” We should observe that in the list of the creation of living creatures, the sea monsters are one thing and the [creeping things of souls] another. And although man is now said to rule over the fish of the sea, the class of sea monsters and the class of wild beasts are passed over in silence. We must not suppose that these are left out for no reason, when it could have been written: “And let them rule over the fish, and the sea monsters of the sea, and the wild beasts of the earth, and the birds of the sky, and the cattle.” Consider also whether, because of this silence, it is possible that not all living creatures came to be for the sake of man. Rather, only those he is said to rule did: the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle of the earth, and perhaps also the reptiles of the earth, because of the very necessary uses of medicines made from them. But these great sea monsters and the wild beasts of the earth did

not come to be for man's sake. Otherwise their naming would have been added to the authority given to human beings.

^{7b} We do not find in Scripture that the class of snakes is placed among the reptiles, but among the wild beasts. [The text here is unclear and the wording appears corrupt:] "For the serpent... legs above its feet, to leap with them on the earth. And these you may eat of them: the locust and those like it, the akris and those like it, the attakes and those like it, and the ophiomachês and those like it. And every reptile among the winged creatures that has four feet is an abomination to you, and by these you will be made unclean." So man rules neither the great sea monsters nor the wild beasts, perhaps because from the beginning they were not made for his sake. Something similar to what is written here about what is under man's authority is said in the eighth Psalm: "You have subjected all things under his feet, sheep and all oxen, and moreover the cattle of the field; the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the seas." Here too the sea monsters and the wild beasts are passed over in silence.

⁸ "And on the sixth day God completed his works which he made." Some people think it absurd that God should have completed the world over several days, like a builder who cannot finish a building without many days. They say that all things came to be at one time, and from this they build their argument. They think the list of the days, and of what happened in them, was given for the sake of order. For this argument they could plausibly use the verse: "He spoke, and they came to be; he commanded, and they were created." ⁹ "This is the book of the origin of heaven and earth, when it came to be, in the day when the Lord God made heaven and earth." The word "book" is not found in this place at all among the Hebrews. It is an error of a Hebrew scribe, who was misled by the same error that appears in Aquila: "This is the book of the offspring of Adam," and in the Seventy: "This is the book of the origin of men." For the scribe supposed that a "book" had been left out in this place too, and so he added it.

¹⁰ "And God planted a garden in Eden toward the east, and put there the man whom he had formed. And God made to spring up out of the earth every tree beautiful to look at and good for food." When we read this and rise above the myths and the literal sense, and ask what those trees are which God tends, we say that there are no trees perceptible to the senses in that place. ¹¹ By the same author. In the translation the phrase "a garden in Eden"

is set down, with the translator using the Hebrew word itself. The proper meaning of "Eden" is "sweet" or "delightful." The Hebrews have handed down that the place in which the Lord God planted the paradise, or garden, is called Eden. They say it is the middle of the world, like the pupil of the eye. For that reason they say the river Pheison is interpreted "mouth of the pupil," since the first river flows out of Eden. What they hand down is this: Eden, which means "delight," existed before the garden came to be, for the garden was planted in it.

¹² "And the gold of that land is good." When our mouth is changed by virtue, and the soul gains mastery over good thoughts, then it feeds good doctrines. The word hinted at these things when it said "good gold." "And the name of the second river is Geon; this is the one that circles the whole land of Ethiopia." Ethiopia is in Hebrew Chous, which also means "darkening." So it is named from Ethiopia, that is, from Chous, because of the dark color of skin which he had beyond his other brothers. ¹³ "And he put him in the paradise." Those who are born again through divine baptism are put in the paradise, that is, in the Church, to work the spiritual works that are within. They receive a commandment to love all the brothers and to eat the coming fruit through endurance, as it was said: "From every tree that is in the paradise you shall freely eat." But a person breaks the commandment of the one who gave him new birth when he uses the reasonings of the serpent, loving some people as good and hating others as wicked. This is the tree of knowing good. Whoever tastes of it dies unhindered. It is not that God made the death, but that the man hated his neighbor. For God did not make death, nor does he delight in the destruction of the living. He is not moved by the passion of anger, nor does he devise some act of vengeance, nor is he changed to suit the condition each person deserves. Rather, he made all things in wisdom, having determined beforehand that they should be judged under a spiritual law. For this reason he says to Adam: "In the day that you eat, you shall die the death." In this way he assigned to each deed, whether good or bad, the fitting result that naturally follows it. It is not a matter of contrivance, as some suppose who are ignorant of the spiritual law.

¹⁴ "And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them." What should we understand by the garments of skin? It is quite silly, like an old woman's tale, and unworthy of God, to suppose that God took skins from some animals, killed or dead some other way, and

made the shapes of tunics by sewing the skins together like a cobbler. Others avoid this absurdity and say the garments of skin are nothing other than the bodies. That is plausible and can win agreement, but it is not clearly true. For if the garments of skin are flesh and bones, how does Adam say before this: “This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh”? Some, then, caught in these difficulties, declared that the garments of skin are the deadness with which Adam and Eve are clothed, having been put to death because of sin. But these people too cannot easily explain how God, and not sin, brings deadness on the one who transgressed. Besides, they are forced to say that flesh and bones are by their own nature not perishable, if our fathers received the deadness later, because of sin. And if paradise is some divine place, let them say how each of the bodily members, which were not created in vain, carried out its own function there. As for the word “nostril” in Aquila and Symmachus, or “face” in the Seventy, for the one who was formed and into whom God breathed the breath of life, we must say this: one should not cling to the letter of Scripture as if it were the truth, but should look for the treasure hidden in the letter.

¹⁵ “And he stationed the cherubim.” It is not only the ministering spirits, sent out for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation, who guard the way to the tree of life. Opposing powers also guard it, hindering those who wish to approach the tree of life. ¹⁶ “And Cain said to Abel his brother, ‘Let us go out into the plain.’” In the Hebrew, what Cain said to Abel is not written. Aquila and his company showed this, and the Hebrews say that this saying is kept in a hidden (apocryphal) writing, and that it [is placed] here in the Septuagint version. ¹⁷ “And Cain said to the Lord God, ‘My sin is too great for me to be forgiven.’” He did not judge rightly. He despised the divine law. He killed a brother, and on top of that he killed a righteous man. He lied. He asked for death, rejecting life and repentance.

¹⁸ “And he begot [a son] according to his own form and according to his own image.” Against those who think that the image of God is one thing and the one made in the image another, we must say this: if Adam is one and his image another, then there is a third, in whose image Adam was made. They will use the text, “Lord, in your city you will despise their image,” and the text, “Surely man walks about in an image.” But we must ask how Adam’s form differs from his image. ¹⁹ “And Enoch pleased God after he begot Methuselah.” If he pleased God after he begot Methuselah, then accord-

ing to Scripture he was not pleasing before this. Clearly he pleased God through repentance, when he begot “the sending away of death,” which they [had] before he begot him. ²⁰ “And God said, ‘I will wipe out man, whom I made, from the face of the earth.’” He does not say simply “I will wipe out,” but “from the earth.” For what was made is not by nature wiped out entirely, since what was made was made in the image of God.

²¹ “These are the generations of Noah,” and so on. If this had been written in the more ordinary way, “These are the generations of Noah” would have been followed by “Noah begot three sons.” But as it is, his generation concerns righteousness. So “These are the generations” is put first, and then is added, “being a righteous man.” ²² “Noah was well-pleasing to God. And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.” Earlier the text says: “Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-eight years, and fathered Noah. And after fathering Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and sixty-five years. All the days of Lamech came to seven hundred and fifty-three years, and he died.” And it says, “Noah was five hundred years old, and he fathered three sons.” In this we find a discrepancy of sixty-five years in Noah’s age. But here the Scripture says that Noah was well-pleasing to God, as it is also written about Enoch. For when Enoch pleased God, then God also took him up. In the same way, then, the divine Scripture did not count to Noah the sixty-five years before he became well-pleasing. So too with Abraham: the sixty years before he knew God were not counted as life for him. The same is true of thirty years for Enoch, twenty years for Saul, forty years for Solomon, and seventeen years for Hezekiah. And a discrepancy of fifteen years is found concerning Methuselah as well.

²³ “And the earth was corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with injustice. And the Lord God saw the earth, and it was corrupted, because all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.” Injustice corrupts the earth, but righteousness saves it. And everyone who sins, as far as it depends on him, corrupts the earth. The earth did not become corrupted in the flood (for then it was washed clean of its corruption), but in injustice. What corrupted the way of God is not spirit but flesh. For “the mind of the flesh is enmity toward God,” and “those who live in the flesh cannot please God.” ²⁴ “Two by two from all you shall bring into the ark, to feed with yourself. They shall be male and female.” Because God wanted the people who entered the ark to remain pure from intercourse, he brings them in this way, and by the manner

of their entering he commands them to spend their time in the ark. For it was not fitting, while their own kind were perishing, that these should be busy with marriage-beds and the begetting of children. But when the terrors had passed and need called for the earth to be filled with people again, he sends them out as married couples, saying: "Go out, you and your wife, and your sons, and the wives of your sons."

²⁵ "And from all the clean animals bring in to yourself seven by seven, male and female; and from the animals that are not clean, two," and so on. Someone might ask how this was said to Noah as though he knew the difference between clean and unclean, when the law had not yet distinguished clean from unclean. So it is worth considering whether Noah knew these things not in the sense of "when Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature the things of the law," but from the natural law. ²⁶ "Noah was six hundred years old, and the flood of water came upon the earth." Perhaps "of water" is added here to mark it off from a flood that is going to come by fire. ²⁷ "And there went in to Noah into the ark two by two from all flesh." As to the literal text, someone might ask why it is not said that the unclean went in two by two and the clean seven by seven, but the clean are passed over in silence. But consider whether the answer lies in the words "from all flesh," where only the unclean are indicated by "from all flesh."

²⁸ "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." How had Noah increased and multiplied, when he had not yet fathered anyone after the flood? Perhaps, then, "Increase and multiply" should not be understood bodily. But if it is not bodily here, because of Noah, it is clear that it was in line with the intention of the spiritual law in the beginning as well. ²⁹ "And the trembling and the fear of you shall be upon all the wild animals of the earth," and so on. Someone does violence to the literal text by claiming that every living creature is afraid when it sees a human being, even the wild animals in the wilderness. But perhaps it is better to understand the wicked powers as the wild beasts of the earth, and the other kinds likewise, as suffering fear from the righteous man, with trembling upon such beings. For the wicked powers fear the righteous man.

³⁰ "Only, you shall not eat flesh with the life-blood in it. For I will also require your blood, the blood of your souls. From the hand of all the wild beasts I will require it." Since the wording on its face is unfitting, we must say that the "beasts" are opposing powers. The soul that sins dies, and the

death of the one who has sinned will be required from the hand of those powers. It is also possible to take it of the cattle, since the Law commanded that a bull that gores be stoned. ³¹ “For in the image of God I made man.” God says, “In the image of God I made man.” The image of the invisible God is the Savior. So, according to the Scripture, the Savior is also God. ^{32a} “Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan.” Why, when the Scripture has said, “And the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth,” did it add, “And Ham was the father of Canaan”? If it had to mention the sons, it should have mentioned all of them, and not Canaan alone. Canaan himself also became ungodly, as the history shows. So the Spirit, wishing to show the father’s kinship with his son, in a way separates Ham from the godliness of his brothers by the addition, “Ham was the father of Canaan.” All were sons of Noah by birth, but this one was not a son in character; he was the father of a child like himself. That is why it is stated so emphatically: “He was the father of Canaan.” The Hebrew who said these things also brought forward a tradition of this kind, and added a proof for the tradition. According to it, Canaan was the first to see the shameful nakedness of his grandfather, and he reported it to his father alone, mocking the old man. Ham, who ought, like his brothers, not to have approached his father in an ungodly way, but rather to have rebuked the first one who saw and slandered, was himself persuaded. He went in, saw, and reported it to his brothers.

^{32b} This too would seem a fable if the proof were not strong. For it says, “Noah awoke from his sleep and knew what his younger son had done to him.” Ham was not his youngest son, but his second, since the order is “Shem, Ham and Japheth.” If the Scripture had wanted to point out the youngest, it would have said Japheth. But since grandfathers always call their grandchildren, and their distant descendants, “sons,” the Scripture says that Noah learned that the youngest of his descendants, Canaan, was the one who had done this. That this is how it stands, the divine saying immediately adds: “And he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.’” If someone wonders why Ham, who was himself ungodly, did not receive the same curse as his son, let him understand this: if it had been said to Ham, “He shall be a slave of slaves,” his brothers would also have shared in

the slavery, just as the brothers of Canaan became slaves under the curse, since Canaan was declared their slave.

³³ “All flesh shall not die again.” He promises that he will no longer bring a flood over the whole world, even though the mind of men is set on evil from youth. It is no longer so every day, as it was before the flood. He grants a small measure of pardon to the young because of how easily that age slips. Therefore he says, “I will not again curse the earth because of the works of men, because the mind of man is diligently set on evil from youth.” That is to say, “I foresee that youth will be prone to slipping in the days to come. So do not be afraid. For this reason I will no longer bring complete destruction on you.” ³⁴ “And Noah began to be a man of the soil, and planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine, and was drunk, and was uncovered in his house.” Noah did not know the nature of wine, that it makes drunk. The Scripture bears witness to this by saying “began,” and “was uncovered.”

³⁵ Of the same author. Earthly wine strips the mind bare of the knowledge of intelligible things. ³⁶ Of the same author. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was like that: like the wine that uncovered Noah. ³⁷ Of the same author. Even if Noah was drunk and uncovered, it was nevertheless in his own house. For it belongs to a holy person not to be uncovered outside his own house. ³⁸ “He was a giant hunter before the Lord God.” The hunter is not now placed among the righteous. And watch whether it is not so at any other time either. ³⁹ “Now the whole earth was one lip, and there was one voice for all.” To those who do not understand the words “I and the Father are one,” and who for that reason deny that the Son has his own distinct existence, we will bring forward the text, “The whole earth was one lip, and there was one voice for all.” And if we ask what difference there is between lip and voice, we will say that the voice is assigned to the spoken language, and perhaps the lip to the thought; or else the other way round.

⁴⁰ “Come, let us go down and confuse their tongue there, so that each one may not hear the voice of his neighbor.” The confusing of tongues is a mark of evil. A mark of virtue is the time when the whole company of believers had one heart and one soul. If you keep watch in this way as you read the Scripture, you will find that wherever there is a multitude of numbers, wherever there is schism, division, disagreement and the like, these are marks of evil. But wherever there is unity and concord and great power in

words, these are marks of virtue. ⁴¹ “And Terah lived seventy years, and he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.” Terah, when he was seventy years old, fathered the father of the nation that keeps the feast, [the “seven”], that is, the week. But I pause to ask whether he fathered the three as triplets. Otherwise, being seventy years old, he could not have become the father of all three by one woman. Yet the text does not show that he had more than one wife.

⁴² “And Abram went down into Egypt to live there as a stranger, because the famine had grown strong on the land.” Abraham did not settle in Egypt as a resident; he stayed there as a foreigner, because the famine had grown strong on the land. ⁴³ “Now the Canaanites and the Perizzites were then living in the land.” The Canaanites lived in the land as settled residents, not as foreigners passing through. So the wicked settle in the land; they do not live in it as strangers. ⁴⁴ “If you go to the left, I will go to the right; and if you go to the right, I will go to the left,” and what follows. Although the choice was granted to Lot out of Abraham’s gentleness, we should notice that the one who chose did not enjoy what he chose, while the one who yielded found that what was left to him was blessed.

⁴⁵ And God said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you now are, to the north and the south, and the east and the sea, for all the land that you see I will give to you.” Encouragement from God follows those who succeed in virtue. After Abraham had yielded the choice to his brother, and Lot had chosen the finest and most fruitful region, God appeared to Abraham and won over his soul with words of encouragement and kind promises. It was almost as if he said: “You despised this earth, the least of things and perceptible to the senses. I will give you the earth of the meek, the land in the country of the living.” For he says, “Lift up” the eyes of your mind, “and look from the place where you now are.” The righteous man’s place is virtue, from which he watches eagerly for the things that are hoped for, and awaits what is laid up in the heavens. If it were not so, how much land could he be expected to see with bodily eyes? Or how far could he stare, turning his face round about in a circle?

⁴⁶ “And they took the horse, all that belonged to Sodom.” The Sodomites are now for the first time said to have the “horse,” and this is said of them as wicked men. ⁴⁷ “And one of those who had escaped came and repor-

ted it to Abram the Crosser.” Abraham is called “the Crosser” because he crossed over from the land of the Chaldeans, passed through Mesopotamia, and came to the regions of the Canaanites. Aquila and his school also render the word as “Hebrew.” ⁴⁸ And he said to him: “Look up to heaven and count the stars, if you can number them. So shall your seed be.” He says that the offspring of the holy man’s soul would become so many and of such quality, in both number and brightness, because God worked with him. These offspring themselves display the divine blessing. ⁴⁹ And he said: “Master and Lord, how shall I know that I will inherit it?” and what follows. It was not the way of the man whose faith was counted to him as righteousness to disbelieve, as someone might suppose. Rather, having believed earlier, he now asks also for knowledge about the things he had believed. God does not make a law for Abraham to sacrifice; rather, the most ancient people confirmed their oaths by such rites.

⁵⁰ “In the fourth generation they will return here; for the sins of the Amorites have not yet been filled up, until now.” The 400 years were granted so that Abraham’s seed might multiply and the signs might take place. How then can it say, “The sins of the Amorites have not yet been filled up”? To show that they are driven out justly, because of sin. In the same way, when Scripture says, “I repented,” it does not describe what God himself feels, and he does not feel what the words say. It shows instead how out of place the thing that happened was. And a little later: Long ago there were righteous men in Palestine, Melchizedek and many others. For Melchizedek would not simply have been a priest if there had been no one to obey him. So “not yet filled up” means “the holy man among them has not yet died out.” They had not yet been filled up and made complete in their sins. For ten righteous men save a city, and at that time there were not just a few.

⁵¹ “They will afflict them four hundred years.” Why does the Apostle name thirty extra years, covering the Covenant he made with Abraham, the journey from Egypt in the wilderness, and the giving of the law? What is said here does not conflict with what is written in Exodus. There it says, “After four hundred and thirty years the host of the Lord went out of Egypt,” while here it says “after four hundred.” But we must notice that it does not say they went out when the four hundred years had been completed, but “after four hundred years,” and the thirty years make this clear. ⁵² “And her mistress was dishonored in her presence.” The text deliberately does not make clear

by whom, so that we might search and discover this: virtue is naturally dishonored when it has given birth to the preliminary studies. It is not necessarily dishonored by Abraham. It is dishonored either by the maidservant, or by those who rejoice in her offspring before the better things are born.

⁵³ “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham.” Look up the meanings of the names, for they were named with real power by the Holy Spirit. And this too must be known: names indicate a state of character, a settled condition, and qualities. From these one can see what the person named is fitted for. ⁵⁴ “Abraham said to God: Let this Ishmael live before you.” Abraham was asking something exceptional for Ishmael. He was not content with “let him live,” so he added “before you.” For living before the Lord belongs only to the blessed and the holy. ⁵⁵ “Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in days.” Perhaps the phrase “advanced in days” is applied only to the righteous. [If that is so,] no wicked person has advanced. ⁵⁶ “And Abraham drew near and said: Do not destroy a righteous man together with an ungodly one.” This is a commendation of Abraham. It shows how firm his piety was, and that is why he was able to draw near. But “drew near” must not be understood in a bodily sense.

⁵⁷ “Lot was sitting by the gate of Sodom.” Lot was not inside Sodom but beside the gate. I would say that Abraham sat outside his tent, out of hospitality, watching for travelers even at an unusual hour (for it was midday). In the same way his relative, who imitated his ways, sat by the gate and urged passers-by to come in, even when evening had already come. He knew above all the ungodliness of those in Sodom, and that there was no rest for strangers there. ⁵⁸ “And he pressed them, and they went into his house.” Lot was not the kind of man Abraham was. So they were reluctant to turn aside to him, and they needed to be pressed. ⁵⁹ “The men at the door of the house they struck with blindness.” It is for their good that they are struck with blindness, since they used their sight badly. Blindness hinders them from sinning.

⁶⁰ “And he overthrew all these cities, and all the surrounding region, and all who lived in the cities, and everything that grows from the earth.” The Lord destroys not only the ungodly but also their foods, which are Sodomite and harmful. Among these is the vine, about which it is written: “Their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and their branch from Gomorrah.” ⁶¹ “And his wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.” It did Lot’s wife no good

to have been taken hold of by the angels, even though she went out of Sodom, since she turned back. ⁶² “But Abimelech did not touch her.” The words “did not touch” carry weight, as in “it is good for a man not to touch a woman.” That means not only avoiding intercourse but also not being stirred by passion in any other way, whether by looking at a woman or touching her. In fact God did not allow Abimelech to touch her. Perhaps he does the same for everyone who is supremely [of sound mind], for such self-control is a gift from God.

⁶³ “And Abraham said to his servants, ‘Sit here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over as far as that place, and when we have worshipped we will return to you.’” He said this because he had reasoned that God is able to raise even from the dead. ⁶⁴ “Abraham took the wood for the whole burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son.” In the same way Christ, with his own cross on his shoulder, suffered outside the gate. He was not forced into the suffering by human strength. He went by his own will, and by the will of God, the Father. ⁶⁵ “Look, Milcah also has borne sons to Nahor your brother: Uz the firstborn,” and so on. Milcah is interpreted “kingdom” [or “queen”]. Uz: “one taking counsel.” Nahor: “rest of light.” Buz: “despised.” Kemuel: “resurrection of God.” Aram (the Syrians): “lofty.” Chesed: “falsehood.” Hazo: “seeing.” Pildash: “fall of one in need,” or “fall of poverty.” Jidlaph: “abundance of [hand/time],” or “take a hand.” Bethuel: “dwelling of God,” or “daughter of God.” Rebekah: “patience.” Reumah: “expected vision.” Tebah [or Tahash]: [something being chewed over, as with the cud]. Tahash: “silence.” Maacah: “empty bowel.”

⁶⁶ “Look, I am standing by the spring of water.” So we must make it our earnest aim to stand by the spring, so that the words “They have forsaken me, the spring of living water” may not fit us as well. ⁶⁷ “And the young woman to whom I say, ‘Lower your jar,’” and so on. This request is fitting for the elder of Abraham’s household, and suits the man who ruled everything that was his. And notice his wisdom, and what kind of sign he sets. ⁶⁸ “The man was watching her closely and kept silent, to find out whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not.” From this we can learn that it is good for the one who prays not to pray with a voice that can be heard by the senses, but in the heart, to the one who searches hearts and kidneys. ⁶⁹ “Isaac was traveling through the desert, by the well of vision.” This is a fitting journey for the holy man. Because of his deep withdrawal from the world he

travels through the desert, and because of his contemplation of the things of God he travels by the well of vision.

⁷⁰ “And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening.” Whoever is going to speak about divine things must go out from earthly things. This is what the text here calls “to meditate.” It does not add with whom he spoke, and reasonably so, since this kind of conversation does not take place among human beings. It is either with God, or a person’s own conversation with himself. ⁷¹ By the same author. The words “toward evening” are a symbol that a person can speak about the more divine things with real understanding only with difficulty, and only when he has reached old age. ⁷² “Abraham added and took a wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore him Zimran,” and so on. From the children of Keturah came very many nations. They settled the Troglodyte desert, Arabia Felix and the lands stretching on from it, including the land of Midian. The city of Midian lies next to the desert beyond Arabia, opposite Pharan, to the east of the Red Sea. From there comes the nation of the Midianites, named after Midian, son of Abraham and Keturah. So it is clear from this that Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was a descendant of Abraham and a relative of Moses.

⁷³ By the same author. Keturah is interpreted “smaller” or “lower” [uncertain]. Jokshan: “release,” or “he will release.” Shuah: [strong people]. Sheba [or Shaban]: “turning away.” Teman: “their failings,” or “those being completed.” Dedan: “sufficient judgment,” or “singleness.” Reuel: “strong friend,” or “shepherding of God.” Nebdeel: “serving God.” Asshurim: “settled,” or “those making straight.” Letushim: “hammerers.” Ephah: “needy,” or “lacking.” Ephraim: “dust,” or “earthen,” or “ashes.” Hanoth: “your grace.” Abida: “height of my father.” Ephron: “dust,” or “earthen,” or “ashes.” Shinar: “noon.” Dumah: “silence.” Mamre: “from vision.” Massa: “lifting up.” Ishmael: “hearing of God.” Hadad: “measure being emptied.” Nebaioth: “prophecy.” Teman: “completion.” Kedar: “darkening.” Jetur: “banished.” Naphish [Greek: Kaphes]: “refreshment.” Mishma: “attention,” or “hearing.” Kedemah: “in front.” Massam: “from spices [or sweetenings].” Havilah [Greek: Euilat]: “in labor.” Shur: “wall.” ⁷⁴ “Settle in the land that I tell you, and live as a foreigner in this land, and I will be with you and bless you.” If someone lives as a foreigner in the place where God’s command says he should settle, God is with him and blesses him. But if someone settles

where he should not even live as a foreigner, God is not with him and will not bless him.

⁷⁵ “Because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my commands, my ordinances, and my laws.” The law of Moses had not yet been written, yet Abraham kept what was commanded. He kept it as the nations do who do not have the law but do by nature the things of the law. They show the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience bears witness to them, as the Apostle says. ⁷⁶ “And Isaac’s servants dug in the valley of Gerar and found there a well of living water.” Everyone who prays to be a child of Isaac should be eager to understand these wells and to dig them within himself. ⁷⁷ “Moving on from there he dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it.” By not resisting those who wronged him, he shows that he was truly without pretense. So God approved his patient endurance and appeared to him and promised him the land. He was not to lose heart because, as a foreign resident, he was exposed to those who wanted to do him wrong. In this he was fulfilling what is said on every occasion: [“if they persecute you”].

⁷⁸ “And he said: ‘The voice is the voice of Jacob.’” Isaac recognized the devout voice, which Esau could never have spoken: “What your God has delivered before me.” Recognizing it, Isaac said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob.” ⁷⁹ “And he said: ‘Behold, the smell of my son is like the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed.’” Clearly this was not a smell perceived by the senses. For what smell could be compared to the smell of a field? Rather, it was probably the kind of fragrance the Apostle claimed to have when he said, “We are the fragrance of Christ to God in every place.” I think that each virtue has its own fragrance, which helps to fill out the virtues. In the same way, on the opposite side, vices stink, as the one who said, “My bruises stank and festered.” It is fitting for the Lord to bless the field of virtues that is fragrant to him.

⁸⁰ “And he said to him: ‘Behold, your brother Esau is threatening to kill you. Now then, child, listen to my voice: get up and run away to Mesopotamia.’” From this we learn that we must run away from those who plot against us and flee persecutions, even if we are counted worthy of visions as Jacob was. One may be comforted by seeing what followed for Jacob as he fled from Esau. He was counted worthy of visions and became the father of twelve tribes. And when he came back from the flight caused by persecution, he became Israel instead of Jacob. ⁸¹ “You shall not take a wife from the

daughters of Canaan.” The daughters of Canaan are evil. They were evil not in Esau’s eyes but in the eyes of Isaac, his father. ⁸² “And the Lord God, seeing that Leah was hated, opened her womb.” He opens the womb for the birth of holy ones. According to the spiritual law, he opens the womb of a soul so that the one who is to be the mother of God’s Word may bear him.

⁸³ By the same author. For she, the elder in time, was the first to bear to God the synagogue and the multitude of the Jews. ⁸⁴ “And Laban said to him: ‘If I have found favor before you, I would have taken omens; for God has blessed me because of your coming.’” There is no divination in Jacob. But Laban says, “I would have taken omens,” as one who was a stranger to Jacob’s way of life, though he was not completely a stranger to it. To “I would have taken omens” he adds, “for God has blessed me because of your coming.” ⁸⁵ “And Jacob took for himself rods of storax, of walnut, and of plane.” The three rods are symbols. They are either the three powers of the soul: the rational, the spirited, and the desiring. Or they are the three kinds of contemplation: of bodies, of bodiless things, and of the Holy Trinity. Or, in general terms, the practical life is meant by the walnut, the contemplative life by the storax, and by the plane tree he hinted at this world and the contemplation of it. Stripping off its green means renouncing it. The green of the practical life is the love of pleasure. The green of contemplation is being occupied with bodies. As for the green in the other two interpretations, examine that for yourself.

⁸⁶ The Lord said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your father and to your family, and I will be with you.” When Jacob had borne fruit and grown rich while living outside his family, then the Lord told him, “Return to the land of your father.” We should understand the Lord to say something like this when we come to our departure, as we are about to go away to our fathers. He also gives a prize to the one who returns to the land of his father and to his family. I think the Lord was present to him in dreams. ⁸⁷ “But your father deceived me and changed my wages ten lambs.” Aquila said “ten in number”; Symmachus said “ten times in number.” So, as the Hebrew says, Laban broke his agreements with Jacob ten times, because the offspring born in Jacob’s name were very many and Laban begrudged him. The two other versions made this plain: “And you cheated me of my wages by ten ewe-lambs.” But there is no mention at all of lambs that he had agreed to give me. Nowhere does it appear that he made such an agreement; it is clear from

what Jacob himself says. In the same way, the text does not show Lamech killing anyone, but he is called to account, so that from the account the deed becomes clear. It is the same here. So Scripture often reveals, through someone explaining it, things it did not explain when they were done.

⁸⁸ “Your sheep and your goats did not miscarry, and I did not eat the rams of your flocks.” The boldness of a good shepherd shows in these words, and we should be zealous to imitate it. Let those in the flocks of sheep and goats bear spiritual fruit, and let us not devour the rich ones of the flock. And since his gods were not found, a covenant was made with the God-inspired Jacob; and the world, when it threw away its falsely named gods, became a friend of Christ. ⁸⁹ Jacob said to his brothers, “Gather stones,” and they gathered stones. In Ecclesiastes it is also written: “A time to cast stones, and a time to gather stones.” They are gathered at the command of Jacob, who was a type of Christ, so that the building may be completed on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ our Lord himself as the cornerstone, built of living stones, when it becomes a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. “And Laban turned back and went to his own place.” For the wicked man, because of his evil, his place is near. But for the one who travels by way of progress, since his place is far away, the labor is not small.

⁹⁰ “And the angels of God met him.” The Lord says, “I am the way.” So angels of God meet the one who travels this way. ⁹¹ “And he commanded them, saying, ‘This is what you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, I have lived with Laban.’” Out of respect he sincerely calls his elder brother his lord. Moreover, a humble reply turns away anger. As a man he was afraid; but trusting God, he did not flee, but went on. ⁹² “And he crossed the ford of the Jabbok.” The Jabbok is a river of Arabia, now called the Iambikes. ⁹³ “And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him,” and so on. Who else could the one called both man and God be, wrestling and contending with Jacob, than the holy Word of God, who spoke to the fathers in many parts and many ways, who is given the titles Lord and God? He also blessed Jacob and named him Israel, adding, “for you have prevailed with God.” The men of that time saw the Word of God in this way, just as the apostles of our Lord said: “What was from the beginning, we have seen with our eyes, and we have looked at, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life.” Jacob also saw this Word and life, and goes on to say, “For I have seen God face to face.”

⁹⁴ “Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a coat of many colors.” The coat of many colors is the best condition of soul, adorned with the virtues. ⁹⁵ “And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his sons, they hated him, and could not speak anything peaceable to him.” The one who hates is unable to speak anything peaceable to the one he hates. So let us put away hatred, so that we may be able to speak peaceable words. ⁹⁶ “The Midianites sold Joseph into Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s eunuch, the chief cook.” In this place Aquila and Symmachus give the name Potiphar as “Eutiphar,” and in another place “Eutiphare.” The interpretation of the present name is set beside the word itself; the explanation of the other will appear in what follows.

⁹⁷ “But Onan, knowing that the offspring would not be his, whenever he went in to his brother’s wife, poured it out on the ground.” Everyone who sows into the flesh, and stores up the works of the flesh in the earth, is like Onan. That is why he is put to death by God. ⁹⁸ “And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man.” Like someone shooting at a target, he stretched his ruling faculty toward its mark, and so he always hit it. Scripture uses this expression in many places. ⁹⁹ “And the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian because of Joseph.” Because the holy man was in the Egyptian’s house, the house is blessed, along with the possessions and the field of the Egyptian. But this is not a spiritual blessing. ¹⁰⁰ “And it happened after these things that the king of Egypt’s chief cupbearer and chief baker sinned against their lord, the king of Egypt.” I think that the phrase “They sinned against the king of Egypt” can be understood by analogy of the martyrs: they sin against the spiritual king of Egypt, but not against God. For they seem to sin against the law of the world, which is opposed to the law of God.

¹⁰¹ “For I was stolen away by theft from the land of the Hebrews, and here too I have done nothing.” By the words “Here I have done nothing” he hints that he did nothing of the kind the native Egyptians do. And it was an Egyptian deed to lie with the master’s wife. ¹⁰² “Joseph answered and said to him: This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days.” It was also said earlier that the three branches are three days. So “three days” is presented both through branches and through baskets, since Providence made use of both, with examples fitting each man’s own way of life, to set forth three days. You could find the same sort of thing in the rest of the Scriptures too:

the same thing made clear through examples that seem different. ¹⁰³ “And on the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he made a feast for all his servants.” One of those before us observed that a person is worthless who honors the things of birth and welcomes the day of his own birth. We confirm that account, since we find something similar in the case of Herod, when Herodias’ daughter danced and John’s head was cut off. And nowhere is a righteous person shown celebrating a birthday.

¹⁰⁴ “And after two years’ time, Pharaoh saw a dream. He thought he was standing by the river,” and so on. The person who trusts in things that flow away and are unstable thought he was standing on the river, from which the things that seem to bring prosperity come up, when his cattle are fat. But these are certainly devoured by worse ones. Compare the word “he thought” with the words “I thought we were binding sheaves.” In the second dream he says, “As though the sun and the moon and the stars were bowing down to me.” Again, the chief cupbearer says: “In my sleep there was a vine,” and so on. And the chief baker says: “I thought I was carrying three baskets of bread on my head,” and so on. ¹⁰⁵ By the same author. The narrator of the text says, “He thought he was standing on the river,” not beside the bank of the river. But Pharaoh says, “I thought I was standing beside the bank of the river,” not on the river. Now the affairs of Egypt, that is, the affairs of the worldly, begin with better things, of which plenty is the symbol, and end in what is more bitter, of which famine is the type. The same can be seen in the account of the rich man. For the seven years of plenty were, so to speak, his: he received his good things in his lifetime, clothed in purple and fine linen and feasting splendidly every day. But it ends for him in the opposite, as he receives the evil things after his departure from here. You could see the same in those who travel the broad and roomy road, whose end is destruction, while those whose beginning is the narrow and pressed way have life as their end. Therefore: “Woe to those who are filled, for they will hunger; and to those who laugh, for they will weep.” “Blessed are those who mourn and weep, for they will be comforted.”

¹⁰⁶ “And behold, seven cows were coming up as if out of the river,” and so on. Pharaoh’s dreams were of cows and ears of grain. The things by which the land is farmed, and what it produces, became for the king advance signs of plenty and of barrenness. ¹⁰⁷ “Pharaoh woke up, and he slept and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears were coming up on one stalk, choice

and good.” Joseph saw not ears but sheaves, while the Egyptian saw not sheaves but ears. Again, the chief cupbearer sees the three stems as three days, but the king sees the seven ears on one stalk as the connected seven years. So the one word “stalk” receives a different interpretation. If anyone ever explains Scripture differently, then, he should not be thought to be forcing it. One more thing is worth noting. In the years of plenty, seven ears come up on one stalk. In the famine there are seven ears, but no longer on one stalk. Another version says “on one reed.”

¹⁰⁸ “When morning came, his soul was troubled. He sent and called all the interpreters of Egypt and all its wise men.” “Of all Egypt”: how did he call the interpreters and the wise men? We must ask this at once with regard to the wording. We must also ask, with regard to the deeper meaning, whether Pharaoh needs Egyptian interpreters as though they were wiser. We say “of all Egypt” because it follows from “all the interpreters of Egypt and all its wise men.” ¹⁰⁹ “And Pharaoh told them his dream, and there was no one to report it to Pharaoh.” I do not think they were completely silent. They said everything except the actual interpretation of the dreams. But someone will ask, “How did Pharaoh know whether the interpreters and wise men of Egypt were getting the dreams right or not?” To this the Hebrew used to say that Pharaoh, when he saw the dream, also saw its interpretation, but that this had slipped from his memory. So as he listened to each man speak, he could not recall what he knew he had seen. This is why he was astounded at Joseph and at once advanced him, entrusting to him all Egypt, its grain, and the safety of the Egyptians. For as soon as Joseph explained the dreams, Pharaoh was reminded that these were the same things that had been shown to him before.

¹¹⁰ “Joseph answered Pharaoh and said, ‘Without God, no saving answer will be given to Pharaoh.’” Joseph is right to begin with God. Notice that to the woman he said, “And I will do this evil thing, and sin before God.” And to the eunuchs in the prison he says, “Is not the interpretation of them through God?” ¹¹¹ “And Pharaoh said to all his servants, ‘Shall we [find] such a man, who has the Spirit of God in himself?’” Pharaoh saw that Joseph had made clear the solution of the dream, which had slipped from his memory. He saw that this was more than human, and so he said that Joseph had the Spirit of God in him. ¹¹² By the same author. Pharaoh too was compelled to speak of one God. This agrees with what was said earlier about the solution

of the dream. ¹¹³ “And a herald proclaimed before him.” The Hebrew has “Abrech,” which properly means “tender father.” It is fitting that he called Joseph a tender father, since Joseph, though tender in age, showed the Egyptians a fatherly, saving leadership. The word indicates nothing other than bending the knee, for the herald’s cry is plain.

¹¹⁴ “And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name [Psonthomphanech].” This is interpreted as “the one to whom the future was revealed.” Aquila has “[Saphamreano].” Symmachus has “[Daphthphane],” meaning “he revealed hidden things.” ¹¹⁵ “And he gave him Asenath, daughter of Petephres, priest of Heliopolis, as his wife.” “Putiphar” is the name of the father of the woman married to Joseph. Someone may suppose that this is a different man from the one who bought Joseph. The Hebrews, however, do not understand it that way. From an apocryphal writing they say he is the same man, who became both Joseph’s master and his father-in-law. They also say that this Asenath accused her mother before her father of having plotted against Joseph, and said that her mother was not the one plotted against. He gave her in marriage to Joseph, and he was eager to show the Egyptians as well that no such wrong had been done against his house.

¹¹⁶ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, “because God has made me forget all my toils and all those of my father.” That God made him forget all his own toils is plainly a good thing. But whether Joseph also forgot everything that belonged to his father Jacob, and God did this to him as well, needs investigation. God does not make Joseph forget the words of Jacob and of his sons. Perhaps the word “toils” is meant to serve for both halves, so that it reads: “all my toils and all the toils of my father.” ¹¹⁷ He called the name of the second Ephraim, “because God has made me grow in the land of my humiliation.” In a mystical sense, spiritual Egypt is the land of the righteous man’s humiliation. So the Apostle speaks of “the body of our humiliation.” In the Psalms it says, “Our life has been humbled to the dust.” And again, “You humbled us in a place of affliction.”

¹¹⁸ Joseph was ruler of Egypt, and he sold to all the people of the land. When Joseph’s brothers came, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. The sons of Jacob were not “peoples of the land,” so he did not sell to them. He gave their silver back to them twice. It was fitting that the sons of Israel should receive their grain freely. ¹¹⁹ Of the same. The text is charming about these same men. When they buy, it calls them “sons of Is-

rael.” When they bow down to Joseph, it calls them “Joseph’s brothers.” But Benjamin bows down neither to Esau nor to Joseph. That is why the temple comes to stand in his portion. ¹²⁰ “Yes, for we are in sin concerning our brother, because we overlooked the distress of his soul when he was begging us.” The word “he was begging” comes from what the text passes over in silence, for it is nowhere recorded how he begged.

¹²¹ Reuben answered and said to them, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do not wrong the boy’? And you did not listen to me. See, his blood is being required.” Earlier it was said that Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites while Reuben was not there. After the sale Reuben went back to the pit and did not see Joseph in it, and he tore his garments. He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not there, and I, where am I to go?” He does not seem to have learned from his brothers that Joseph had been sold. So perhaps he thought Joseph had been killed, and that is why he now says, “See, his blood is being required.” ¹²² Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will rise and go, so that we may live.” Perhaps he is prophesying that Benjamin was going to be with the tribe of Judah.

¹²³ “I will take him; require him from my hand. If I do not bring him back to you,” and so on. Judah reckoned that none of the things that can happen to a man would happen to Benjamin [as a man]. So he makes this promise to his father, in a prophetic way, I think. ¹²⁴ “Take some of the fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down to the man gifts: resin, a little honey, incense, storax, terebinth, and nuts.” Gifts are carried to Joseph from the fruits of the land, things Egypt does not have: resin, honey, incense, storax, terebinth, and nuts. Earlier too, “the camels were laden with incense, resin, and storax,” but not with honey, terebinth, and nuts as well.

¹²⁵ Of the same. The Midianites bring down three kinds of goods into Egypt along with Joseph. The sons of Jacob add three others to these and bring them to Joseph. Still, it is the seed of Abraham that brings both the first set and the second. It was fitting that the lesser goods should come from Abraham’s illegitimate children and the greater from his legitimate ones, since Egypt had need of these.

¹²⁶ They said, “We are being brought in because of the silver that was returned in our sacks at the beginning. It is so that he may bring false charges against us, attack us, and take us as slaves, along with our donkeys.” It is implausible that men who thought themselves in such a predicament would

worry about their donkeys, unless the passage is to be read allegorically. ¹²⁷ He said to them, "Be at ease. Do not be afraid." It seems that the man in charge of Joseph's house said this, having been helped toward reverence for God by Joseph. ¹²⁸ "Benjamin's portion was made greater than the portions of all, fivefold compared with theirs." It was made greater either because of Jerusalem, or as a type of the apostle Paul. And Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, divided the land among the other tribes. ¹²⁹ "For God sent me ahead of you, to leave you a remnant." Since God sent Joseph ahead of his brothers into Egypt for the life of many, it is clear that in sending him to Egypt God made use of the zeal and the choice of his brothers for the plan concerning Joseph and the life of many. So there are times when God makes use of the sins of others, and plans what is his own for the salvation of other people.

¹³⁰ "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God, and he made me like a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler of all the land of Egypt." The one who rules over bodily things and never yields to them could say, "God made me lord of all the land of Egypt." ¹³¹ "And do not spare the eyes of your possessions, for all the good things of Egypt will be yours." Whatever there is in the land that is called Egypt in a figurative sense, it does not belong to the Egyptians but to Israel. For this reason, at the exodus, the Hebrews also stripped the Egyptians and took vessels of gold and silver, and whatever good thing there was in Egypt. ¹³² "And I will bring you up to the end." This is a promise fitting for God: not only to bring up, but also to carry the one brought up through to the end.

¹³³ Of the same. To those who look in the Pentateuch for the life after this one, we will say: since the one who said "I will bring you up" does not lie, he did bring him up later in this life, and after the exodus he brought him up, when afterward Joseph laid his own hands on the bodily eyes of Jacob. And God brought Israel up, leading him, after the end of his life, to the end that is with himself. ¹³⁴ "And Jacob rose up from the well of the oath, and the sons of Israel took up Jacob their father." The one who came to the well of the oath is Israel, bringing with him, I think, Jacob and all that was his. But the one who rises from the well of the oath is Jacob; for it was not Israel who needed raising up, but Jacob. Then after this, it is not the sons of Jacob but the sons of Israel who have taken up Jacob their father, since he needed to be taken up.

¹³⁵ Of the same. Pharaoh sent wagons to carry not Israel but Jacob. Jacob went into Egypt, but he did not go down. For it was to Israel that it was said, "Do not be afraid to go down into Egypt." ¹³⁶ "Jacob went into Egypt, and all his seed with him." Here it is called the seed of Jacob, though earlier it was the sons of Israel. Still, if Jacob and all his seed went into Egypt, yet Er and Onan did not go in, then they were not the seed of Jacob. ¹³⁷ "His daughters and the daughters of his daughters." It is clear that, since he had his daughters with him, he also brought along his sons-in-law. For he could not bear to send his daughters out of his house, lest they turn to idolatry. ¹³⁸ Of the same. If Jacob has no daughters, how do his daughters go down into Egypt? So let it not be taken allegorically. The text goes on to say that thirty-three came from Leah, and that a daughter was named Dinah.

¹³⁹ "And these are the names of the sons of Israel who went into Egypt." These names are of the sons not of Jacob but of Israel, and they went in, not down, into Egypt. ¹⁴⁰ "The firstborn of Jacob, Reuben," and so on. Though he said above that these were the names of the sons of Israel, now he says that Reuben is the firstborn of Jacob. ¹⁴¹ Of the same. It should be noted that along with the sons born to Jacob in the land of Canaan, he also counts the sons of Joseph who were in Egypt. For this contributes to the later passage near the end, where he says: "Ephraim and Manasseh are mine, like Reuben and Simeon." ¹⁴² "And Israel said to Joseph, 'I will die from now on, since I have seen your face, for you are still alive.'" It is a wonder that one who lived in Egypt was not harmed by the Egyptians and remained in a life according to God. That is why Jacob, marveling, said to Joseph, "For you are still alive."

¹⁴³ "Your servants have been shepherds of sheep from childhood until now." ... "And they said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to live as foreigners in the land.'" They speak boldly to Pharaoh about being shepherds. Then, so that Pharaoh would not be disturbed, they say, "We have come to live as foreigners in the land." ¹⁴⁴ And Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Let them live in the land of Goshen." In the Tetrapla, from which the copy was also taken over to agree with the sequence in the Hebrew and the other editions, it is shown that the Septuagint has in some places been rearranged, so that what came first became last and what came last became first. This is what happened here, and for that reason we have set out the proper order. It is this: "We your servants will live in the land of Goshen" is joined to "And Pharaoh said to

Joseph: Let them live in the land of Goshen.” Then: “And if you know that there are among them...” and so on.

¹⁴⁵ “And if you know that there are capable men among them, appoint them rulers over my cattle.” Pharaoh wants to appoint the capable men of Israel as rulers over Egyptian cattle. But if anyone in Israel is a capable man, let him flee the wish that lies behind such an offer. “And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from him.” Having blessed a righteous man, he would not have gone out from him. We must ask whether anyone who blessed a holy person ever went away from him. Here Jacob goes out as the one who has blessed; but earlier Jacob goes in as the one who has obtained blessings.

¹⁴⁶ “And Joseph brought all the silver into Pharaoh’s house.” And where else should all the silver of Egypt and Canaan have been, if not in Pharaoh’s house? ¹⁴⁷ “And they brought their cattle to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and the sheep, and the oxen, and the donkeys.” Joseph does this not out of harshness, but so that the people would not wear themselves out feeding the animals, and so that afterward they might receive the animals back as a favor from Pharaoh. “And nothing is left to us before our lord except our own body and our land.” Of sinners it is said, “because they are flesh.” So here too the Egyptians, being flesh, say that what is left to them is not a soul, but their own body and their land. We should understand that this is what all who are strangers to God would say.

¹⁴⁸ “So that we may not die before you, and the land be laid waste, acquire us and our land.” The Egyptians want to live before Pharaoh, not before God. ¹⁴⁹ By the same author. The Egyptians want to become Pharaoh’s possession, as the saints are God’s. ¹⁵⁰ “For the famine had prevailed over them.” Clearly this means the Egyptians; for it is never said of Israel that the famine prevailed over them. ¹⁵¹ “And Jacob, having strengthened himself, sat on the bed.” He sat after being strengthened so that he could speak the God-inspired words. For I think Jacob was the one who was troubled, but Israel was the one who was strengthened, who also blessed the sons of Joseph, and what follows. In that passage the name Jacob is not used in connection with the boys. ¹⁵² “And he said to me: Behold, I will increase you and multiply you.” Either the ungodly man does not increase, or he does not increase from God. You may say the same about the word “multiply.” For it is God who says these things when he blesses.

¹⁵³ “Ephraim and Manasseh are mine; they shall be mine like Reuben and Simeon.” Ephraim is like Reuben, for both are firstborn. Manasseh is like Simeon, for each was second son to his mother. “And the offspring whom you father after these shall be under the name of their brothers; they shall be called in their inheritances.” He means that Joseph’s other children, who will be born later, will be placed in the distribution of the inheritance under the tribes named after their brothers. ¹⁵⁴ “And Israel, seeing the sons of Joseph, said: Who are these to you?” and what follows. The phrase “Israel, seeing the sons of Joseph” will seem to contradict “Jacob’s eyes were heavy with old age,” unless perhaps the eyes’ inability to see and Israel’s seeing the offspring of Joseph are the same thing, since God had shown him what was going to happen. ¹⁵⁵ “And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim.” This is because the prophets followed along, understanding what they were prophesying. Indeed, afterward the tribe of Ephraim took the lead over the ten tribes. For from Ephraim descended the blessed Joshua son of Nun, who is mentioned in Numbers and was a true type of Christ. For this reason Joseph’s blessing is carried over to him.

¹⁵⁶ “May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.” And he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. You will use this text well on the point that in prayer the more honored person stands in front. “Bending down you lay down like a lion and like a lion’s cub.” “You lay down” signifies the death that came by the plan of salvation. Christ is a lion to those who have become completely wild like beasts, but to those who are still beginners he is a cub.

NOTES ON GENESIS

NOTE 7

^{4a} “I am bringing rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. And I will wipe out every living thing that I made from the face of the earth, from man to beast.” Why did he destroy the multitudes of people with the flood? He wanted to wipe out the race of Cain. But the tribe of the godly had become mixed with it, and so it shared in the punishment. Wishing to make a kind of new beginning for life, he preserved Noah and his sons with their wives. Noah was godly and righteous, sprung from the piety of his kinsmen, and he hated the mixing in of lawlessness. He did not do these things, as some say, out of anger and regret. For these are human passions, and the divine nature is free from passions. Besides, regret belongs to those who learn

the nature of things only after experience. Then, learning by experience that they planned wrongly, they regret it. But God sees what will happen after many generations as if it had already happened. Since he sees ahead and knows beforehand, he governs everything accordingly. Why then does he regret, when he arranges everything according to his own foreknowledge? So when it is said of God, regret is a change in his plan. "I regret," he says, "that I made Saul king." This means: I decided to stop him and appoint another.

^{4b} So it is here too: "I considered that I had made man." He decided to destroy the human race. But since he loves humanity, he kept Noah as seed for the race. And since he created the kinds of animals without reason for human use, these were destroyed along with humans, except those kept safe in the ark with Noah. For God the Master commanded that two of each kind of the animals considered unclean be saved, and seven of the clean. He was going to permit people to eat meat, and those he was raising would offer sacrifices of reverence to him. So he ordered that more of the clean animals be preserved: three pairs for the increase of the kind, and the one left over for sacrifice. For right after [the ending] of the punishment, Noah offered a thank offering to God, "from all the clean cattle and from all the clean birds," it says. So it is clear that this is why God ordered seven of each clean kind to be brought into the ark: so that Noah, by offering the one animal from each kind, would not destroy the pairs.

¹⁶ "And the Lord God shut the ark from outside." The security of the door, once shut, needed a more than human power.

NOTE 19

"And he overthrew these cities and all the surrounding region and all who lived in the cities." "And his wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." The Lord destroys not only the ungodly but also their foods, which are Sodomite and harmful. Among these is the vine, about which it is written: "Their vine is from the vine of Sodom, and their branch from Gomorrah." As soon as Lot was brought safely to the city, the fire was brought on the cities, a sign of the end that is coming. She did not become simply a pillar, but especially a pillar of salt, because of the words, "You are the salt of the earth." You can also apply to the pillar of salt the words, "But if the salt becomes foolish?" Lot did not go up to the mountain at once, as he had been told, but first went to Zoar, because he had no confidence in himself about going up to the mountain.

NOTE 23

“Land of four hundred didrachmas.” Note that four hundred is the price of a tomb, because the four and the hundred are harmful numbers. If you search the Scriptures for similar cases, you will find them.

NOTE 37

“Shall we really come, I and your mother and your brothers, to bow down to you on the ground?” Clearly Joseph’s mother had died before the dreams. So might we say that Mary and Joseph are foretold as going to bow down to Christ?

NOTE 43

(8) Verse 22. “And he said to them, ‘Peace be to you [or: God be gracious to you], do not be afraid.’” This man seems to have been helped toward true reverence for God by Joseph.

NOTE 46

(9) Verse 34. “We are men who raise livestock.” “Every shepherd of sheep is an abomination to the Egyptians,” but not to the Hebrews. So if he stands over us as a shepherd, he is an abomination to the Egyptians. But if he is a hired hand, he may even be a friend to the Egyptians.

SELECTA ON EXODUS

NOTE 1

“And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. And when you go away, you will not go away empty.” This promise had been given beforehand to Abraham, when God said, “After these things they will come out from here with their belongings.”

NOTE 2

“And Pharaoh’s heart grew strong, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had commanded them. And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Pharaoh’s heart has become heavy, so that he will not send the people away.’” The phrase “Pharaoh’s heart has become heavy,” spoken by the Lord after Aaron’s rod turned into a serpent and swallowed up the rods of the magicians, deserves a closer look. Is it something different from “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened,” which is said many times, and from “grew strong”? For this too is said: “And Pharaoh’s heart grew strong, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had

spoken.” It seems to me that a heart which yields to divine things is softened. It does not have the strength to stand against the divine, and it is not weighed down or dragged below to earth and matter. But a heart which strains against the divine will and opposes it is hardened and pushes back like a stone. It throws off the word, and in arrogance resists it with a falsely named strength. Such a heart, dragged down by wickedness, which tends downward, must necessarily become heavy. Yet these things do not happen to the heart in the same sense, even though growing strong and becoming heavy both happen to one and the same wicked heart. For in one case, as it is said somewhere, the heart becomes stony and is hardened. In the other, it does not give way to the divine nature as to something stronger. Rather, it takes its stand to fight against God, and so is said to be strong.

NOTE 3

“And Moses said to him, ‘As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord, and the thunders will stop, and the hail, and there will be no more rain.’” For the Maker of all has nature yielding to his command.

NOTE 4

From the same author. It should be noted that Moses does not work all his wonders with the rod, but also with his hands and with a word, so that the many would not suppose that the rod accomplished them through magical deceptions.

NOTE 5

“Let each one take a sheep for the households of the families,” and what follows. He says they are to take the sheep from the tenth day and keep it until the fourteenth. They are to name it, saying, “This sheep is sacrificed for so-and-so and so-and-so,” with no more than ten names. On the fourteenth it is sacrificed between the evenings, as the fifteenth begins. So from the taking to the sacrifice there are five days, when the light of the moon is full.

NOTE 6

“You shall have a perfect male sheep, a year old.” Christ is the sheep of a year. For the year shows that he lacks nothing and has nothing deficient.

NOTE 7

“And the whole multitude of the congregation of the sons of Israel shall slaughter it toward evening.” We are commanded to slaughter the sheep to-

ward evening, because our true sheep, the Savior, also came into the world at the last hour.

NOTE 8

“And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel, in the houses,” and what follows. We sacrifice, and we anoint our houses with the blood. I mean the body, if the anointing is faith in him, through which I believe that the power of the destroyer is made ineffective. After we have been anointed, that is, have believed in Christ, then we are commanded to come to the eating. The meat is to be neither raw nor boiled in water, but roasted with fire.

NOTE 9

“Everyone who eats leaven, that soul will be destroyed out of Israel.” A person will be destroyed on account of leaven! The God of all, who gives the laws, destroys the man with leaven in his house on the day of unleavened bread just as he destroys the adulterer, the fornicator and the corrupter of boys. Is this in keeping with God? Is this in keeping with the heavenly law? But I would answer that if you have the leaven of wickedness, and do not destroy every trace of the leaven of evil from your ruling faculty (for this is your true house), then the God of all lays down by law that you be destroyed, because you did not throw the old leaven out of yourself. For when you come into the season of new things, you must become new and keep nothing that is old. “The old things have passed away,” and so on. See how the feast of unleavened bread had to be kept in the month of new things.

NOTE 10

“You shall touch the lintel and both doorposts with some of the blood that is by the door.” The lintel, as one of those before us has explained, stands for the rational part of the soul; the two doorposts stand for the spirited part and the desiring part.

NOTE 11

By the same author. We do not drive out the destroyer by some device once he has got inside. Rather, so that he may not slip in at all, we set up a guard by means of the law. The guard and the security is this: the lintel and the doorposts of the entrance are marked with the blood of the lamb.

NOTE 12

“And it happened at midnight that the Lord struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt.” God brings these deadly plagues through angels. So too in the books of Kingdoms we learn how in a single night the angel destroyed 185 thousand of the Assyrians.

NOTE 13

“This is the law of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it. And every household servant, and anyone bought with money, you shall circumcise him, and then he shall eat of it,” and so on. Following what has been set out, this is a third law, which the Lord spoke again in addition to the two laws. Pay attention to the precision of Scripture: the Lord did not give this law about the Passover at the beginning. For if he had said, while they were still in Egypt, before Israel departed from Egypt, “No foreigner shall eat of it. And every household servant, and anyone bought with money, you shall circumcise, and then he shall eat of it,” the great mixed crowd that came out of Egypt would not have come out. So he kept this law back, so that after those who wished had come out, another law might be given. And a little later. If we interpret these things allegorically with reference to our soul, we shall say that the household-born are the words that have grown up with us and been cultivated in us, which begin to take their stand from notions born in us. The bought-with-silver are all those that come to us from outside, from teaching and from lessons. He says, then, that all are to be circumcised and cleansed, both the household-born and the bought. But we must receive no foreigner, that is, we must not admit a foreign teaching. For he does not admit a foreigner who wishes to profane the feast of the Lord. And a little later. If you eat the words of God in the Church, but also eat in a synagogue of the Jews, you transgress the commandment that says, “It shall be eaten in one house.” And if you share in the words of God in one house, the Church, and then leave it and suppose you are sharing in God in a heretical assembly, when the commandment says, “It shall be eaten in one house,” you are not eating in one house. Understand, then, that the Church is the one house. So never eat of the lamb once you have gone outside the Church.

NOTE 14

“And you shall not carry any of the meat out of the house.” A word of the Church must not be carried as an envoy outside the Church, just as the meat

is not to be carried outside the house. I mean into a synagogue of Jews or of heretics. For that is like throwing pearls before pigs.

NOTE 15

“No uncircumcised person shall eat of it.” Every offspring of the soul that is intelligible, and passes beyond material things (and the material things are the female ones), must be circumcised and cleansed, so that in this way a person may share in the meat of the Passover. The proselyte also becomes like one native to the land. For God does not prefer well-born seed; he welcomes the choice of the will.

NOTE 16

From the same. By “uncircumcised in the flesh” he means the person who has not cut away fleshly things, just as “uncircumcised in the eyes” means the person who looks at what he should not. From the same. See to it that none of you is uncircumcised in heart, that none has failed to be circumcised with the circumcisions that the Word teaches we should undergo. Which ones are these? Some people are reproached as being uncircumcised in the ears, and all who have not been circumcised in their hearing are unclean. A person is uncircumcised in the lips when he does not cut away hostile and unclean words. In the same way one can speak of someone as uncircumcised in the flesh, the one who has not cut away fleshly practices. One can also speak of someone as uncircumcised in the eyes, the one who sees what he should not and does not cleanse his power of sight. And a person is uncircumcised in the flesh when he does what he should not do.

NOTE 17

“Then the sons of Israel set out from Sokchoth and camped at Othom, beside the wilderness.” In Numbers it is written that the sons of Israel encamped “from Boutha to the mouth of Iroth, which is opposite Beelsepron, next to Borra.”

NOTE 18

“And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the cavalry of the Egyptians, and third-men [tristatai] over them all.” These are either men able to fight against three, or men who in the battle line stand in the third rank, behind the front-rank man and the second-rank man. Others say that they built large chariots for use against the enemy, big enough to hold three, so that one drove and the other two fought. Or it may mean men who rode on

three horses; for the ancients in wars, when they went out as charioteers, rode on two or three horses. Or he calls the “third-man” the one who, when the king is seated, stands third, or has the third seat. Such was David beside Saul, as you will find in the first book of Kingdoms.

NOTE 19

“There God set before him ordinances and judgments, and there he tested him.” When God tests, he tests for a person’s benefit, not to do him harm. This is why it was said, “God cannot be tested by evils.” The word adds this a little later: “If you listen carefully to the Lord your God, I will not bring on you any of the disease that I brought on the Egyptians.” So the one who bears trials nobly is crowned. The case of the devil is different: he tests in order to put to death those who obey him. God tests without being ignorant of what will happen, but he gives the person freedom to do what he wishes, because of free will.

NOTE 20

“This is the word which the Lord spoke: Sabbaths, a holy rest to the Lord, tomorrow.” I am recording what has been said about the sabbath. First, according to the plain wording, so that people may see what the letter means. Second, according to the higher sense, in which I would say that a sabbath day has come upon the righteous person who has put an end to the works of the world, who glorifies God and is at leisure for him; who does not depart from the place where Christ stands; who does not light a fire that burns, in that he does not sin at all; and who does not lift burdens. Every sin is a heavier burden than a mountain. This is why the Psalmist said, “Like a heavy load they have weighed heavily on me.” There would also be another recording of the sabbath, according to which “a sabbath rest remains for the people of God,” a rest that is sacred and holy. The one who has done all his works is judged worthy of that sabbath, giving his leisure to nothing but the contemplation of truth and wisdom. We have set these things alongside because Moses here makes mention of keeping the sabbath.

NOTE 21

“And you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it.” Christ is likened to a rock because he cannot be shaken or moved. For the divine and supreme nature is firmly fixed in what is good.

NOTE 22

^{1a} “For I am the Lord your God, a jealous God, who repays the sins of fathers upon children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, and who shows mercy to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” Whom has this saying not troubled? If the father sinned, and the son, and the third and fourth generation receive back the sin, then some people accuse even the God who gave the laws. Others do not accuse him, but sincerely hope for something of this kind, and expect that the sons will receive back their fathers’ sins. The Jews think this, and they do not set up any other god. The Samaritans suppose it, since they too believe they share in the one God. Those from the heresies are not pleased that a God who repays the sins of fathers into the lap of their children could be good or just. They say that the God of the law is neither just nor good, since he repays the sins of the fathers on the sons, and that there is some god greater than he. But the man of the Church neither hears these words in a bodily way, as a Jew does, nor invents another god, as a heretic does. He stands between the two and says: “These things are rightly written, but I do not know the meaning of what is written.” So let all of you lift up your minds and ask that he reveal to you how it is that the one who repays the sins of fathers upon children is good. Who are the fathers? Bring the Scriptures as witnesses; let the sacred words be examined. The Savior and Lord Jesus Christ says to those who sin: “You are from your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth.” So then, if anyone sins, he is from the father, the devil, and for this reason the devil’s sin is repaid upon the son.

^{1b} But that one is the first sinner, the one who suggested the sin to me. I am the second sinner, since I did not throw out his purpose but accepted his working. I ought to stand armed with the full armor of God and hold the shield of faith, so that all the burning arrows of the evil one are put out on the shield of my faith. So if I sin, I am doing the devil’s work. He has cast into my heart the thought that I should commit this sin or that one. First I accept his arrow, and when I have accepted it, then I accept him as well. For it is written this way about Judas: Satan did not enter into him first. First the devil cast into the heart of Judas Simon Iscariot the thought of betraying him, and then, after the morsel, Satan entered into him. So I have a father: if I am holy, God; but if I am a sinner, I have the devil as my father. And also,

let us say, the one who immediately worked in me, Antichrist, or some angel of the devil, or a demon, whose working I accepted. In short, I have countless fathers if I become a sinner. Likewise, if I become righteous, God is my father, as the Savior says: "Little children, I am with you a little while longer." And again: "Daughter, your faith has saved you." And again: "Child, your sins are forgiven." In this way I know of other fathers too, according to what is written to Abraham: "You will go away to your fathers." This does not mean his fathers according to the flesh, for they were not faithful and not holy, as is clear from the history written about them. For if his father had been holy, it would not have been said to him, "Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father's house."

1c For the word has a bodily sense and it has a spiritual sense. If you have understood who the fathers are, then see what follows: because you have sinned, you receive your repayment from the devil, or from one of the spirits under him, since you accepted his working. So having become a son of those, you receive what is due to you from the good God who is visiting you. For he is not visiting your father; he is visiting you, and he says to you, "Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear," and so on. And he gives to you as one who is good. For he visits you, the son of the wicked father, and repays the sins. "So I will visit your lawless deeds with a rod," says he to you who are holy; "and I will visit their injustices with whips." Why? So that "I may not scatter my mercy away from them." For when God abandons someone, he no longer punishes him or whips him. For he does not "whip" everyone, but "every son whom the Lord receives." And it is said in the prophet about those who are completely sinful: "I will not visit your daughters when they commit fornication, nor your brides when they commit adultery." For all this time, from the creation and the foundation of the world, the devil has been sinning, and there is neither fire nor whip for him. For he is not worthy of the punishments that come from God. For the devil cannot say, "Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger," and so on. So let each one who is aware of his own sins pray to be punished. For it is good to have done nothing worthy of punishment. But if we have done something worthy of punishment, let us be punished in such a way that we receive our due here, and after this find rest in the bosom of Abraham.

NOTE 23

“And these are my ordinances, which you shall set before them. If you acquire a Hebrew servant,” and so on. It is necessary to examine what a law is, and what a command, and what ordinances, and judgments, and testimonies, and commandments. An ordinance, then, is what is said here: “If you acquire a Hebrew servant,” and the rest that is said about him. A judgment is, for example, that if a priest’s daughter commits adultery, she is burned with fire. Commandments are such as, “You shall have no other gods.” A command is, “Go down and testify to the people, and let them wash their garments.” Testimonies are such as, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today.”

NOTE 24

“Six years he shall serve you; but in the seventh year he shall go out free, without payment.” The release in the seventh year, and also the rest from works on the sabbath, signify the freedom we have by grace through Christ.

NOTE 25

“His master shall bring him to the court of God.” Aquila and Symmachus said, “to the gods.” They call the judges gods, and the “court of God” is the verdict of these judges.

NOTE 26

“Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. Keep the feast of unleavened bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time of the month of the new [grain]. For in it you came out of Egypt. You shall not appear before me empty. And you shall keep a feast of the harvest of the firstfruits of your works.” So the feasts of God, since they have spirit in them, are spiritual. No one who is earthly keeps the spiritual feasts in a spiritual way. “For what harmony is there between righteousness and lawlessness?” (I will not go on to the rest.) An earthly person cannot keep spiritual feasts, just as a spiritual person cannot keep an earthly feast. And after a little: What is the month of the new? You will say it means the fruits we can see. But the month of the new has not yet arrived, since the year, let us say, is still late. And if there should ever be a year in which the land does not bear its fruits, can we then keep the feast in the month of the new, as God commanded those who keep the feast to do? So the feast would have to be kept year by year. I am also puzzled again about the second law, the one

about the second feast. For it says, “the feast of the harvest of the firstfruits.” If someone sows, and the fruits do not come first but last, he could not keep the feast of the beginning of the harvest of the firstfruits. For you must have produce in order to be able to keep the feast. And what if I have no land? How could I keep this feast, when the text says, “And you shall keep a feast of the harvest of the firstfruits of your works, of whatever you sow in your field”? I did not sow; I am a builder. I did not sow; I am a weaver. I have no field. How can I keep the second feast? And the same holds for the third: “And the feast of completion at the going out of the year.”

NOTE 27

And after other things: What does the word want to tell us when it commands us to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the month of the new? Put off the old man with his practices. And so that you may keep the feast in the month of the new, become new yourself, so that the month of the feast of the new may also be your month. For this month belongs to the new, and not to the old. How, then, must you too become new? The apostle Paul, understanding the feasts, and the feast of the new, says, “Having put off the old man with his practices, and having put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.” So in order to keep the feast in the month of the new, you must become new and put away all oldness. Then what feast do you keep first? That it is the feast of unleavened bread, learn from the Apostle: “For our Passover, he says, Christ has been sacrificed for us. So let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” And gather together at the same time what has been laid down about the feast of unleavened bread, and you will see the senselessness of those who cling to the letter as though it were the spiritual meaning, and who despise the spiritual interpreters as though they were of no use.

NOTE 28

“You shall not appear before me empty.” Know that every person is either empty or full. If someone does not have the Holy Spirit, has no knowledge of the Creator, has not received Jesus Christ as life, does not know the Father in heaven, does not live according to the Word and the heavenly law, is not self-controlled and does not act justly, such a person is empty. But if he has

made room for God who said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them, and I will be their God," he is not empty but full.

NOTE 29

"Three times in the year every male of yours shall appear before the Lord your God." I would say this is what the text means. What we do is either female or male. If what we do is female, it is bodily or fleshly. For when we sow to the flesh, we make the offspring of the soul female, not male: limp, soft and material. But if we look at the things that are eternal and set our mind on the better things, and bear the fruits of the Spirit, then all our offspring are male. So what is brought before God, what will be seen by the eye of the Creator, is male and not female. For God does not think it worthy to look at what is female and bodily.

NOTES ON EXODUS

NOTE 15

Verse 25. "There God set down for him statutes and judgments, and there he tested him." God tests for our benefit. For he cannot be tested by evils himself. He tests so that, if they obey him, they may obtain good things and be set free from evils.

NOTE 20

Verse 4. "You shall not make for yourself an idol." An idol is one thing, and a likeness is another. It is a likeness if you make the likeness of a fish, a four-footed animal or a wild beast, whether by craftsmanship or by painting. An idol is whatever the soul forms in its imagination and makes out of things that do not exist, as an original invention. For example, a creature mixed together from a man and a horse. Verse 4 (continued). "Whatever is in heaven above, and whatever is on the earth below, and whatever is in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them." To bow down is one thing, and to serve is another. The one who gives himself to these things with his whole soul does not only bow down but also serves them. But the one who pretends, and acts out of custom, does not serve them, yet he bows down. You will find such people in the book of Numbers, who were gratifying women and bowing down to idols.

NOTE 28

Verse 30. Since it is fitting for the high priest to carry around, both in front and behind, like a shield, a watchful and protective care, lest some opposing counsel from the spirits of wickedness wound his reason, throw into confusion the trustworthiness of his judgments, and, by mixing in evil, make the disclosure and the truth fall away.

NOTE 31

Verse 1. "And the Lord spoke to Moses." The all-wise God kept Moses for a full forty days to give the law, though he was able to give the law in three days. But he did so in order that the time of Moses' absence might expose the ungodliness hidden in the depth of the Jews' hearts.

SELECTA ON LEVITICUS

NOTE 1

"And he called Moses back." It is named Leviticus because what concerns the priesthood and the sacrifices, and whatever commands of that kind God gave, are set out in this book of Leviticus. Exodus also contains laws from God. But how the priests were consecrated by anointing, how the tent was constructed and received its fitted assembly, and many other things, Leviticus records. If it also contains some other matters, that is no surprise, for the title "Leviticus" indicates what is most important in it.

NOTE 2

By the same author. Those who do not look rightly at the teaching on sacrifices either despise it as a cheap legislation that contains nothing worthy of the Creator, or else they ungodly condemn the Creator himself for legislating cheap things. But the one who has understood what David said and what the Apostle said can see that teachings worthy of God lie hidden in these things. David says, "Uncover my eyes, and I will contemplate the wonders out of your law." The Apostle cries out, "The law is spiritual."

NOTE 3

"A man from among you, if he brings gifts to the Lord." We have observed in many places in the Scriptures that "gifts" is said of living animals, while "sacrifices" is said of things without life, as in what is said in Genesis: "And God looked at Abel and at his gifts, but he did not pay attention to Cain and

his sacrifices.” This also needs to be said: of living things it says, “A man from among you, if he brings gifts”; but of lifeless things, “if a soul.” The soul stands for the lifeless thing. The result is that, of the irrational animal, only the rational part is left, and, with the lifeless thing overcome by the fire, only the living part remains.

NOTE 4

“They pour out the blood at the altar.” The altar on which the whole burnt offerings are sacrificed is called the altar of burnt offering. The inner altar is the altar of incense.

NOTE 5

By the same author. Because the Jews, who had grown used to sacrifices in Egypt, delighted in them, as the making of the calf in the wilderness also testifies, God allowed them to offer these to himself. In this way he bridled their unruly impulses toward many gods and toward sacrificing to demons.

NOTE 6

“But if one soul sins unwillingly.” Whatever evil someone does is unwilling. It should be noted that Scripture calls the unwilling act of ignorance a sin. The blessed Paul also recalls certain other things when he says, “For the law had a shadow of the things to come.”

NOTE 7

From the same. “If a soul sins unintentionally,” it says, “and does not do some of all the commands of the Lord,” this is in keeping with nature. For perhaps there are even some commands of the Lord that one ought not to do, according to the saying, “I gave them statutes that were not good.” So a soul sins unintentionally when, under the pretext of piety, it keeps what it should not keep. Such a soul needs a sacrifice for forgiveness. The one who acts on purpose does not need a sacrifice. An example is the man who became a Jew in order to win Jews, and who circumcised Timothy.

NOTE 8

“The soul that touches anything unclean, or anything that has died of itself.” By “that which has died of itself” he means the person who has died to God, with whom one must not even eat, for whoever touches him is unclean. This also is unclean: what has been hunted down by our adversary the devil. The unclean beasts could be those who have come to the word but remain

beast-like, and who have sinned unto death, and have not become worthy to be saved even along with the beasts, according to the saying, “You will save men and beasts, O Lord.”

NOTE 9

“Everyone who touches them will be made holy.” Some say that “will be made holy” means “will be defiled.” I think this is not because of the sacrifice but because of the boldness of the one who touches. For Haggai says, “Whoever touches will be defiled.”

NOTE 10

From the same. We say that the sacrifices were rather a source of food for the priests, and a shadow of true piety. The gain from sacrificing is twofold: honor is offered to God, and a person would not worship what he himself sacrifices, nor think it to be God.

NOTE 11

“And you shall not die.” The word seems to threaten death to priests who drink wine and strong drink when they go into the tent. For bishops who pray on behalf of the people must turn away from drunkenness, not only that of wine but also that of worldly affairs and human reasonings. He does not forbid this as though wine were improper in itself. He forbids it because he knew the lack of self-control in the Israelites: whenever they started drinking, they went on to excess. So when they enter the holy things, they should keep the soul sober and exact, and the remembrance of God fine and clear.

NOTE 12

“Why did you not eat the sin offering in the holy place?” He shows that if the priests do not eat, the sacrifice is left incomplete and the sin remains. For some of the blood should have been brought in, and they themselves should have eaten.

NOTE 13

“If today they have offered their sin offerings.” Since it happened, he says, that Nadab and Abihu died for offending God, at the very time when they should have eaten the people’s sin offering so that what the people had sinned might be forgiven, how shall we, who today are convicted in our sins,

win forgiveness by eating? For the priest must first make atonement for himself.

NOTE 14

“These are the animals you shall eat.” Wild beasts are in no way clean, for all are unclean according to the law which says, “Everything that goes on its paws among all the wild beasts shall be unclean to you.” In a general sense, all the cruelest of men could be called wild beasts, about whom the prophet says, “When evildoers draw near against me to eat my flesh,” and so on.

NOTE 15

“Every animal that has a divided hoof.” The divided hoof stands for the person who lives devoutly in this present age and hastens toward the age to come. As for the dividing of the hoof and the cleaving of the claws, it stands for the person who cuts away what is superfluous and dead from his hands, that is, his actions, and from his feet, that is, his manner of life. In addition, as for chewing the cud, it means not only taking in spiritual food but also recalling it and meditating on it continually.

NOTE 16

“This is the law concerning the animals and the birds and every living creature.” He gives much attention to clean and unclean. First he teaches that the soul is to be holy. For if what is natural, made as it is by God’s command, can be unclean, how much more can what comes from a wicked choice and has not come about by God’s command? If someone considers unclean what God made, how much more what stands opposed to God’s will and does the very thing he forbade?

NOTE 17

“If a scar appears on a person, in the skin of his flesh.” This is applied to certain blemishes of the soul. When bodily wounds have been healed, a mark of what the place suffered sometimes remains, which we call a scar. In the same way a soul that has taken the wound of sin, even if it receives healing, sometimes keeps what is left behind like a scar. We must also understand how it is cleansed from this, or how it is not cleansed.

NOTE 18

“For a man or woman on whom there is a stroke of leprosy.” We should observe the difference in wording. In some cases the text says, “If it appears on

anyone, in the skin of his flesh,” or “For a man or woman on whom there is a stroke of leprosy among them.” In others it says, “If flesh has a sore in its skin,” or “If flesh has a burn of fire in its skin.” These are wounds.

NOTE 19

“His garments shall be loosened.” By this the text hints that the one whose soul has been made leprous must not hide his sins or cover them up. Just as the garments of a man who is loosened do not cover his shame, so the law wants him to be exposed to all, and not to become a whitewashed tomb. To have the mouth covered means to have no boldness to open the mouth. To go outside the camp means no longer to dwell together with the choirs of the saints.

NOTE 20

“And they shall slay the one bird in an earthen vessel.” The little bird is sacrificed in an earthen vessel, with living water put into it beforehand, so that the cleansing may come by water and blood, which came out from the side of the Savior. By “cedar wood” he means the wood of our salvation. The scarlet thread spun was a type of the precious blood, by which the whole world is cleansed. I take the hyssop to be the warmth that comes through the Spirit, and the scarlet cord to show the Word’s union with flesh.

NOTE 21

“He shall shave his head and his beard.” He shaves the head with respect to the principal and chief points of doctrine. With respect to the beard, which is the symbol of the man, he puts away the sins of the man. With respect to the eyebrows, he puts away all conceit, and, if I may coin a word, all “eyebrow-raising” pride. He says these things are symbols: having grown on and sprouted from the soul, they are called hairs of deadness.

NOTE 22

“He shall take two lambs without blemish, a year old.” The text divides what is offered into three. One is the release from sins previously committed. Another is that the whole is offered to God. The other is what is offered on behalf of the one being cleansed, concerning what has been done by him. Perhaps the three tenths of fine flour are also taken so that one tenth goes with the lamb that is slain, the second with the other, and the third with the sheep. So at the fifth cleansing he has not meal but fine flour, which is a symbol of the material for pure bread, and it is mixed with oil. This oil is taken

as nourishing light, serving the need for light and not for fire. He also has, apart from the oil taken for mixing the fine flour, oil by itself, which is offered through the priest, being the measure of a cotyle. And it seems to me that the words "The priest who cleanses the man shall set the man who is being cleansed" very much require a priest, and that this happens before the Lord.

NOTE 23

"And the one whose house it is shall come and tell the priest." We say that the lawgiver did not mean that someone must go to the priest to accuse his own house. He meant rather that he goes to ask a physician for a remedy for what has happened. So we say that the synagogue of the Jews has been made leprous. The person who reports stands for the choir of the holy prophets. They report to the great High Priest, that is, before his indignation, the sufferings of the Jews' folly. They do this not from hatred or enmity but out of reverence for the benefactor. They acknowledge the Jews' offenses, and yet they call upon him to have mercy.

NOTES ON LEVITICUS

NOTE 4

²⁷ Verse 27. "If a soul sins unintentionally," he says, "and does not do some of all the commandments of the Lord which it ought to do." (12) But if it is according to nature. Perhaps there are some commandments of the Lord which one ought not to do, as in the saying, "They gave them commandments that were not good." So a soul sins unintentionally when, under pretext of piety, it keeps what it should not keep. And it needs a sacrifice for forgiveness, though the one who acts on purpose does not need a sacrifice. An example is the man who became a Jew in order to win Jews, and who circumcised Timothy. ²⁸ Verse 28. This shows that even the thing that is offered is itself called "sin." That is how we should understand the saying, "They will eat the sins of my people." So if the one who sins seems to sacrifice the sin itself by repenting, he ought not to fall into the same things again, since the sin comes to life again. In this way it is possible to call Christ "sin," because he was slain for the sin of all.

NOTE 12

Verse 2. "A woman who, if she is seeded, and bears a male child." The words "if she is seeded," placed before "and bears a male," will seem superfluous. But I wonder whether he said the whole thing prophetically. Mary bore a male child without having been seeded. He may have said it so that she would not be thought unclean for having borne the Savior. Yet even if the words "if she is seeded" had not been put first, Mary could still be understood as not unclean. For she is not simply a woman but a virgin.

NOTE 13

Verse 45. "And the leper, in whom is the plague, his garments shall be loosened, and his head uncovered." Why does he command that the leper's head be uncovered and his garments loosened? So that he may be recognized, and so that those who come near do not share in the uncleanness. In the same way the Apostle said about those who sin: "Keep yourselves away from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which you received from us." And again: "If anyone who is called a brother is sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or a drunkard, or abusive, or a robber, do not eat with such a person."

NOTE 23

² Verse 2. "These are the feasts of the Lord." Every joyful day on which certain things are prescribed to be done, as on a holy day, distinct from the other days, is called a feast. But not every one is a festal assembly. A festal assembly is so called, according to the name, when people gather in one place from every direction. So a festal assembly is also a feast, but a feast is not necessarily also a festal assembly. For example, Sabbaths and New Moons are feasts. But Unleavened Bread, the days of Weeks, and Tabernacles are not only feasts but also festal assemblies. ⁴⁰ Verse 40. "And branches of palms." Through these we can understand that God again, in Christ, gives us the delights of paradise. The boughs of evergreen plants signify in themselves the continuance of grace and the unfading nature of hope.

NOTE 27

¹⁵ Verse 15. "But if the one who sanctified it redeems his house, he shall add to it a fifth of the silver of the valuation, and it shall be his." Suppose someone sanctions to God not the value of a house or a field but the things themselves. He shall pay the value with the fifth when he redeems them, and

he shall keep the possessions. But he shall not sell them to others. And even if he sells them, the buyer will hold them only until the Jubilee, and after that they shall belong to God. ¹⁶Verse 16. "But if from the field." The one who has bought a field by purchase will not take it back for himself. Instead, having paid the fruit of it to God in due proportion, he will give the field back in the Jubilee to the one who sold it.

SELECTA ON NUMBERS

NOTE 1

"Our eyes see nothing but the manna." It was named "Man" because the Hebrews, seeing a strange sight for the first time, said to one another in their native language, "Man," that is, "What is this?" They would not have said that if it had been customary, as some of the Gentiles say, for the nature of those places to produce such things from ancient times. And even now, if a little comes down, it is for the sake of remembrance.

NOTE 2

"And they did not add." The words "to prophesy" are missing. He means that they no longer prophesied. They prophesy only once, so that they would not be made equal to Moses. But so that it might be known that they had received a share, they all prophesy together. For in Christ the Spirit is one, and there is one working through all.

NOTE 3

"And the people did not move on until Miriam was [shut away / cleansed]." The tent stayed seven days in the place in honor of Mary, so that she, being in such a condition, would not have to follow along. "Send men for yourself," and so on. He commands that some be sent, showing that they were now drawing near to Palestine, [having made clear that the way out of Egypt had been easier for the Hebrews]. And having exposed their unbelief, he assigns the wilderness as a tomb to those whose minds remained hard. For the death of the ungodly is preferable to wandering in life.

NOTE 4

"And Moses named Ause the son of Nave, Jesus." It should be noted that the son of Nave became a type of Christ. Christ freed the most pitiable people from their wandering and led them up into heaven, not into a land that devours its inhabitants.

NOTE 5

“Surely they will not see the land which I swore to their fathers.” Notice that some of those who came out of the land of Egypt did enter the land of promise, for God did not forbid this. He destroyed in the wilderness only those who were twenty years old and above, of those who came out of Egypt and made the calf. He spared the young, who were related to them, whose time of life had not yet reached twenty years. Much more did he spare the infants and small children, up to the age of adolescence.

NOTE 6

From the same. This is a type of the truth: “Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom.”

NOTE 7

“Take up the bronze fire-pans.” Just as the bronze serpent was a sign of their unbelief, so also were the fire-pans of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, which were put around the altar as a covering.

NOTE 8

“And to the sons of Levi, see, I have given every tithe in Israel.” It was reasonable that the firstfruits be assigned to the priests, since the tribe of Levi does not inherit and does not receive an allotment as the others do. This allotment, a share with the altar, is what brings about the priests’ lack of possessions. The people gave tithes to the Levites, and the Levites gave to the priests. “Shall we not bring water out of this rock for you?” Moses did not give glory to God before the people, and so he was prevented from crossing over with them. And lest they honor him in death with the worship that belongs to God, when they had honored him while he lived, God made the place [of his] tomb unseen.

NOTE 9

“Now this assembly will lick up all who are around us.” This took its illustration from the calf. As the calf has the green grass in its mouth, so the holy people, fighting with their lips, have their weapons in their mouths, through their prayers. Balak knew that this had plainly happened in the earlier wars, and he wanted to fight with weapons of the lips too. So he calls Balaam, who had as his weapons curses on his lips, the weapons of the opposing power. For the holy angels work together with the righteous toward saving and good

deeds. The evil demons work together with impious, sinful people toward wicked deeds that harm people's salvation. The holy fight with the words of prayers, but the impious and sinful with the words of magic.

NOTE 10

From the same. The history, taken in terms of the events as they appear to the senses, is also full of great benefit. From the history before us we learn many things. We learn that it is possible to fight with words, and that great matters are managed and set right through words. The holy fight with the words of prayers; the impious fight with the words of magic.

NOTE 11

From the same. The opposing power never does a good work, but works only the worst things. And the evil that it works, it cannot restore to something better, for it does not have the standing of the better. But for the better power all things are possible. For our God causes pain and then restores again, but he has no evil to work. He is good not only by disposition but also by his very being.

NOTE 12

From the same. Among human practices there are also oracles that are carried out, and sacrifices, and certain gifts offered to demons, so that those who wish may divine by means of these offerings. Each such practice is an oracle, for it is not a true prediction.

NOTE 13

"And [the Lord] came to him." In truth a divine power came to Balaam, though he had not called it. It came, then, to turn away the demons that Balaam was calling, and to arrange the divine predictions.

NOTE 14

"And the angel of God stood up to oppose him on the road." The angel who opposes Balaam on the road: could this be the one of whom God said to Moses, "My angel goes before you, guarding you on the way"?

NOTE 15

"Go with these men." God had not allowed Balaam to go to Balak. But since Balaam wanted to go, God permits it. He commands him to say only what is revealed to him, and the angel, appearing and frightening him, confirms this. "Build me seven altars." Works are also done through another body,

both on the better side and on the worse. Examples are what happened in Egypt through Moses and Aaron and the enchanters. But when the divine power is measured against the opposing power face to face, in the sight of those who were in doubt, the divine power wins. So Moses' rod swallowed up the rods of the enchanters.

NOTE 16

Of the same. Balaam used to serve with these same sacrifices and call up the demons. For sacrifices of this kind were being offered to the demons throughout the world. This is why God demanded sacrifices of the first people. Offering to God would put an end to offering to demons, even though the sacrifices were chiefly symbols.

NOTE 17

Of the same. When the Savior became man, he sent his disciples to untie the donkey. That is, to free it from the bonds with which the opposing power, the spiritual Balaam, had bound it. They untied it and led it to Jesus. They laid their garments on the donkey, that is, the virtues of the Gospel. The Savior sat on it and entered the holy city.

NOTE 18

"And Balak took Balaam to the top of Phogor." Balak supposed that Balaam's craft was limited by place. So he took him to the top of Phogor, thinking that Balaam the magician had power from there to curse the people of God. Phogor is interpreted "seasoning," or "skin of the mouth." That is, the peak of the love of pleasure and the deadness of speech. From these Balaam tried to curse the people of God.

NOTE 19

Of the same. There are two peaks, that is, the peak of the highest virtue and the peak of evil. Moses went up to the top of virtue, and Balaam to the top of evil.

NOTE 20

"He did not go, as he was accustomed, to meet the omens." This Balaam is a symbol of the people from the nations. They used to follow omens, but they learned that it is [insatiable] to the Lord, and did not do it again. Balaam is also interpreted "vain people," and "son of Beor" is interpreted "made of

leather.” “Vain” describes the nations as they were before. “Beor” describes the one who was in vanity and in deadness, clearly as he was before.

NOTE 21

“The man who truly sees.” I who was once Balaam, the vain people, have opened the inner eyes of my mind. I have seen the spiritual Israel of old and the plan of God concerning him, and I am counted worthy of [the gift] of the Holy Spirit. The words “The man who truly sees says,” and what follows, do not suit the Balaam of former times. They suit the Balaam of now. “How fair are your houses, Jacob, your tents, Israel.” The name Jacob does not belong to the one who dwells there but to the house. The name Israel belongs to the one who dwells there. For “Jacob” belongs to the bodily thing.

NOTE 22

“Like shady groves.” The groves are spiritual. They give shade to the place where rational beings are fruitful and thick with leaves of active virtue. The gardens beside a river are spiritual. They are a place where rational beings are planted, watered either by the contemplation of created things or by the contemplation of the holy Trinity.

NOTE 23

Of the same. Those who live in tents are among those who travel on the road. Outside this world there is a great road and many tents. Those who settle in a place are not among the travelers but among those who stand still.

NOTE 24

“Like cedars beside waters.” The spiritual cedars, planted beside the waters, are rational souls, watered by the knowledge of the truth.

NOTE 25

“And he will rule over many nations.” A lord is one who gives orders with authority, and a slave is one who obeys like a slave. A lord is one who acquires by his own labors, and by his lordship has become free of passion. A slave is one who is ruled by passion, in need of what is better, and requires the oversight of his own lord. There are many lords, but blessed are those who have our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord.

NOTE 26

“And his kingdom of Gog will be exalted.” “Kingdom of Gog” is interpreted “gifts.” On one understanding, the gifts are the gifts of the Holy Spir-

it. On another, it refers to “Let the one on the housetop not come down into his house.” So it is a kingdom of such a state of soul.

NOTE 27

“God led him out of Egypt.” This applies both to the Savior, according to “Out of Egypt I called my son,” and to Israel. The one he casts out, the other he calls.

NOTE 28

Of the same. The oracle that the Lord would come into Egypt pointed to the carrying away of our Savior Jesus Christ, which was to take place together with his parents. This world too is compared to Egypt.

NOTE 29

“His glory is like that of a one-horned beast.” Christ is the one-horned one in a spiritual sense, by attribute, and from him come many one-horned ones. For from the one Jesus Christ many have come to share in being christi. Some also say that the deer is one-horned.

NOTE 30

“He will eat the nations of his enemies.” This is about Christ. We ourselves were once nations of his enemies. So Christ eats us, as the essential virtue feeding on us, just as he says, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.”

NOTE 31

“And he will crush their fat to the marrow.” He says this refers to the time when he changes the fleshly condition into a spiritual one through actual deeds.

NOTE 32

“Those who bless you have been blessed.” Here he indicates two kinds of people: believers and unbelievers in relation to Christ. And after a few lines: In these words, then, both the attempt of those who opposed Israel and the evil craft of sorcery are overthrown.

NOTE 33

“And the people were defiled by committing fornication.” The plan that the Hebrews should commit fornication and worship Baal-peor came from the diviner. This is why Moses says: “These things happened to the sons of Israel

by the word of Balaam, to turn them away and make them disregard the word of the Lord on account of Baal-peor.”

NOTE 34

“And the border toward Libya will be yours.” He promised Abraham the land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. Why, then, did he not give it to them? For the numbers show that a smaller amount was given. I think he would have given it, if they had been faithful like the man who received the promises. This is only reasonable. For often he threatened evils and did not bring them, because people repented, as in the case of the Ninevites.

NOTE 35

“Except that wives shall be taken from the people of their father.” God therefore commands that, apart from the tribes of Judah and Levi, marriage is not permitted from one tribe to another. The purpose is that the Savior should not be shown to be a stranger, coming from above: “a king and priest after the order of Melchizedek.”

NOTES ON NUMBERS

NOTE 11

Verse 7. “Now the manna was like coriander seed.” As for “like coriander seed,” the others read “bdellium.” Another says “from honey.” Aquila and Symmachus read “oil of mastic,” or “of mastic into fat.”

NOTE 12

Verses 1, 2, 10, 15. Miriam spoke abusively against Moses and was made leprous. She was put outside the camp and sat there seven days. This happened to put fear into the people. For if he did not spare his own sister, he would not spare anyone else.

NOTE 14

Verse 36. “And the men...” Those who find fault with the land have, by their own reasoning, shown God to be a liar (in a pious sense), since he praises Palestine.

NOTE 22

² Verse 2. “And Balak saw...” “Nations heard and were angry.” Among these words is also this: “The rulers of the Moabites—trembling seized them.”

⁴ Verse 4. For they brought the fee for this, as for a diviner, to bring him.

NOTE 23

Verse 7. “And taking up his parable...” In some places the divine Scripture prefers and puts first what is symbolic over the historical narrative, in its own subject matter.

NOTE 24

⁷ Verse 7. “And he will rule over many nations.” There are many lords and many gods. But blessed are those who have our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord, for they will rule over many lords. ¹⁷ Verse 17. “And a man will rise from Israel.” They say that Balaam had pupils in his craft, who had studied magic under him. They say that, because of the reputation he had, they wrote down his prophecies and left them behind, among which is this: “A star will rise.” Or perhaps the Magi received this from their fathers’ tradition and succession, and so came to Bethlehem.

SELECTA ON DEUTERONOMY

NOTE 1

“Moses spoke to all the sons of Israel according to everything the Lord commanded him.” God was revealing the power, and the prophet used his own tongue to set forth what had been made known. So the prophetic voice is called a “movement,” since it presents what God has said.

NOTE 2

“And I said to you at that time.” Moses does not say “I told you” without reason. Since Joshua son of Nun was going to succeed him after he departed, Moses says the matter is not out of place but fitting. For he says he first encouraged them, and, as you agreed, appointed judges. So you should also obey Joshua son of Nun, who succeeds me by prophetic grace and as a guide.

NOTE 3

“I will not be able to carry you alone.” And of those who go ahead.

NOTE 4

“I gave to Reuben and to Gad.” The lesser ones reach the promise sooner, while the more upright receive it later. The former received their inheritance first, under Moses; the latter later, under Joshua. But this is said of all the righteous, not of ordinary people. For as the Apostle says: “All these, though they were commended through faith, did not receive the promise, since God had foreseen something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect apart from us.”

NOTE 5

“The sound of words which you heard,” and so on. He does not mean that the voice was visible, or that God has a voice by nature, for that would belong to a composite nature. The trumpets and the voices, in the way God himself knows, were produced from the continuous working of visible elements, I mean the fire and the darkness. So a voice is heard and not seen. Yet in the case of God’s wonders the voice is in fact seen.

NOTE 6

“And he swore that I should not cross this Jordan.” Moses did not give glory to God before the people, and he was prevented from crossing over with them. This was so that they would not honor him in death, with the kind of worship given to gods, when they had honored him while he lived. For this reason, when he died, God made his tomb unseen.

NOTE 7

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today.” God does not permit those who worship him to be joined to demons. He commands those who have once come to know him to keep clear of any attachment to them. He provokes the peoples to jealousy over their falling away, and he announces beforehand the punishments that are coming on them because of the wickedness of their practices.

NOTE 8

“Out of the house of slavery.” For in truth bodily and material things are a house of slavery, just as, by contrast, their opposite is a house of freedom.

NOTE 9

“For you are the fewest of all the nations.” This was well said to those who belong to the portion of God: “You are the fewest of all the nations.” It is

closely related to the saying, “Few are those who are saved,” and to the saying, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate.”

NOTE 10

“That man will not live on bread alone, but on every word,” and so on. Again, the manna was the Word, even though Exodus calls it bread. For it says, “This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is the word which the Lord has commanded.” This is also why the manna “was fine, like white coriander seed, like frost on the ground.” The Word, of whom that manna was a symbol, is fine in his own nature. He passes through all spirits that are intelligent, pure and most subtle. Wisdom too is “an intelligent spirit, holy, only-begotten, manifold, subtle,” and so on. It was also like coriander seed in being white. They say that the whole nature of coriander, all the way through, has the character of seed. Even when the coriander seed is chopped up, its power does not vanish, as though it could no longer be sown. The Word is like this all the way through. Every part of him is by nature fit to be cultivated in good and fair ground, that is, in the soul. The manna is white, for the Word is light and bright. In that respect he is white to the one who understands him and is nourished by him. It is also like frost. For he is compacted, nowhere soggy or flowing away, but firm. He is indeed the Word of heaven, and he reports to us the things of heaven.

NOTE 11

“For the Lord your God will bring you into a good and spacious land.” Christ did not promise to give us these things, but the kingdom of the heavens, and a good and everlasting land. Christ is the torrent of that land, watering it with the streams of wisdom. The torrents flow through the plains, through humble and fruitful people, and through the high mountains, which stretch up to the heavens by the height of their contemplation. There is the grain, which steadies the heart of a man, and the barley, which feeds those of lesser strength. There is the true vine, Christ. There is the oil that makes the heads of the holy shine. Likewise there are pomegranates, which carry sweetness within and put on the severity of a disciplined life outside. There is the fig tree, not the fruitless one that is full of leaves, but the one rich in the sweetness of the Spirit. There is the desirable sweetness of the Savior’s throat, and the lips of the bride in the Song, dripping honeycomb. There are the holy stones, which have been rolled over the earth and yield

nothing under trials, taking on the nature of iron. There are the mines of bronze, from which they made the spiritual armor. And the sum of all these things is to bless God without ceasing.

NOTE 12

By the same author. He says that in the promised land one will not have to toil and suffer over clay and brickmaking, but will have stones, and very hard ones, not easily broken down, enough for building and lasting a long time. He says this because he wants their thinking to turn away from Egypt. By calling the land “good” he showed that it is fruitful; by calling it “large” he showed its size and breadth. “Where there are torrents of water” (this is not so in Egypt) “and springs of the deeps”; this is a special mark of the land of promise. He added also “through the mountains.” Egypt has none of this. It is not adorned with vines either, and has no abundance of oil. But the land of promise has everything in rich supply.

NOTE 13

“Take heed to yourself, lest you forget the Lord your God.” After promising good things, he rouses them to sober watchfulness: they must remember their benefactor, and not grow insolent from being full, nor look down on the one who gave them these gifts, and who brought them out of slavery in Egypt into freedom.

NOTE 14

“You shall not do so to the Lord your God.” He blames people for sacrificing their own children to the gods of the nations, as cruel and inhuman, and as abominable. Those who urge us to sacrifice to the gods of the nations we must not only turn away from, but also refuse to lend our ear to their words.

NOTE 15

“You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.” When people sin, speaking generally, they sin in two ways: either by going beyond the commandments or by emptying them out. When we do not conduct our lives with knowledge, and do not know the measures of righteousness, we stumble. And sometimes we go beyond the rule, under the illusion of doing something better, and fall away from what was set before us.

NOTE 16

By the same author. So those who do not do everything commanded, and those who do something more, are lawbreakers.

NOTE 17

“Every animal that divides the hoof and brings up the cud.” The dividing of the hoof shows the path by which we go toward every one of the good pursuits. The chewing of the cud is turning the words of the God-inspired Scripture up and down, and, as it were, chewing them over and breaking down the hidden insights by close investigation.

NOTE 18

“All that have fins and scales among them, you shall eat.” Of the winged creatures, I think, he wants those that have spurs above the feet, lower than the knees, to be clean; those that do not, unclean. “You shall keep a feast of tabernacles for yourself seven days.”

NOTE 19

We find in the Scriptures both the name “feast” and the name “festal assembly,” as in the prophet who says, “What will you do on the day of the festal assembly and on the day of the feast of the Lord?” We must ask what the difference is between a feast and a festal assembly. Every joyful day, so to speak, on which certain special things are commanded to be done as on a holy day, differently from the other days, is called a feast. But not every one is a festal assembly. That name belongs to the time when the Hebrews gather from every quarter to one place. So by this reckoning a festal assembly is a feast, but a feast is not necessarily a festal assembly. For example, sabbaths and new moons are feasts. But the days of Unleavened Bread, the days of Weeks, and Tabernacles are not only feasts but also festal assemblies, since then every male is commanded to appear before the Lord your God in the place he will choose.

NOTE 20

“You shall not move your neighbor’s boundaries.” In many places “neighbor” is used of every human being.

NOTE 21

By the same author. For one must neither take more than one’s share from those nearby, nor stir up trouble over the boundaries of the fathers, as if they

were not well set. This would be the cause of all confusion: the neighbors would feel wronged, and those who set the boundaries would be despised. Some say that “neighbor” means every person.

NOTE 22

“But if an unjust witness rises up against a person.” This was the law for the weak Israelites. But the Lord, who gave this law, says to his disciples: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye,’” and so on, “but I say to you, do not resist the evil one.”

NOTE 23

By the same author. These things apply to what is perceptible and to the affairs of this world. But as for the sins we have committed, God needs no one. For he himself is overseer of all, and judge.

NOTE 24

“Who is the man who is afraid?” The person who is bent on earthly things, who builds a house and plants vineyards, and is overcome by fleshly pleasures, will certainly be fearful and without strength.

NOTE 25

“If anyone has a disobedient son.” He does not intend that such children be put to death simply for embittering their parents. It is only when both parents agree against the child. For if the father is angry and rushes to kill the son, the mother holds him back. And if she herself is provoked, the father will not allow it. So it will rarely happen that parents agree against their own child. God commands that when both agree against the child, then he is to be stoned. The ones who stone him are not those who begot him, but the rest.

NOTE 26

“You shall not sow your vineyard with a different kind of seed.” This is so that the ground does not become too weak, and so fail to yield a full return either of the seed or of the fruit of the vine, but each crop is grown by itself.

NOTE 27

“You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.” Do not yoke together the proud and hard-working part of the soul with the part that loves pleasure and is subject to passions.

NOTE 28

By the same author. Isaiah writes again: "Blessed are those who sow beside every water." What water is it, beside which one must sow the good seed? It would be the baptism of salvation, the washing of rebirth. Sow upon the mystery of the washing, and you become blessed. There the ox and the donkey tread: the ox is the clean one, the Israelite, and the donkey is the unclean one by birth, the one from the nations. Both animals are a symbol of the word proclaimed to the nations. So, he says, the ox and the donkey tread this water, where we wish to sow.

NOTE 29

"But if there is a girl, a virgin, betrothed to a man." He calls a woman who is already betrothed by this name. The same was said of Joseph and the Mother of God.

NOTE 30

"And even to eternity." These people also are born of fornication, from the daughters of Lot. They are not only barred from the assembly of Israel until the tenth generation, but even forever. In this way he wants the hostility toward them to be everlasting. According to the meaning and the true cause given in the divine Scripture, it was because they hired Balaam to curse the Hebrews. They also put forward their own women and daughters, all who were fair to look at and beautiful in appearance, from their race, so as to give them to the Israelites for fornication. In this way they brought on the Hebrews a most grievous fornication, which was to fall away from God and be initiated into Baal-peor. And that is what happened.

NOTE 31

"You shall not take a millstone or an upper millstone as a pledge." He says that a single stone cannot crush the grain, for a mill is made as a pair, male and female. Now the Jews have only one covenant. In the same way every heresy that seems to hold to this new covenant alone does not grind in this mill, so as to taste the heavenly bread. For, he says, unless the grain is crushed and ground, they remain without food. Starting from this, I myself explain the law before us: "You shall not take a millstone as a pledge." That is, you shall not profane the old covenant, and you shall not push it out of your house. "Nor an upper millstone." That is, the new one. "For this man takes a life as a pledge." That is, the soul is fed by these, enjoying food for the mind.

NOTE 32

“They shall flog him by number, forty.” We have always observed that the number forty is a number of affliction. So the great Moses fasted forty days, and Elijah after him. Our Savior also, when he was tempted by the devil, did not eat for forty days and forty nights. And the great flood came upon the earth when God sent rain for forty days and forty nights. “You shall not put iron to them.” We must ask why he does not allow iron to touch the stones that were used to build the altar. Yet afterward, for the building of the temple, he commands that uncut stones be gathered and built up. If it is improper for iron to touch a stone fitted for building, how then were the pillars made? How were the planks and their capitals worked? Or how were the things made of bronze, gold or silver produced without iron? How could that be? From this it is clear that he does not forbid iron to touch stones in an absolute sense. What then is the reason? We offer an answer without insisting on it. Iron is hard. So it is forbidden to put something hard against something hard and to strike them together, for great evils are usually born from the meeting and clashing of hard things. Or else the law drives murder as far as possible from the human heart, and very rightly. For if iron must not be put to the stone that is being built into the altar or the temple, how much more must we forbid seizing iron and murdering one’s neighbor?

NOTE 33

“These shall stand to bless the people.” We should observe that those appointed to bless were born of the free wives, relatives of Jacob. Those set apart to curse from Mount Gebal were from the maidservants, except Reuben and Zebulun. Reuben is placed with those who curse, since he was cursed by his father. As for Levi, though he too was cursed, he was ransomed by the priestly dignity, for blessing the people is above all the priest’s task. Simeon, too, since he lived in the midst of the tribe of Judah and had become as it were a part of it, is therefore counted wherever Judah is.

NOTE 34

“And this is the blessing with which Moses blessed.” The prophecies from Jacob were neither all blessings nor all curses, but those from Moses are all blessings.

NOTE 35

“And he hastened down from Mount Paran.” That is, he no longer gave oracles to Israel but to those from the nations, and he established the law. For this is the meaning of “he hastened down from Mount Paran,” or “he ceased,” as another text has it: he will eagerly leave the shadow behind and reveal the truth to us.

NOTE 36

“With tens of thousands of Kades.” Here “Kades” does not mean the place but the holy ones, for in the Hebrew language Kades means “the holy.”

NOTE 37

“And he spared his people.” That is, by his coming he saved those who were once not a people but are now God’s people, those who had not received mercy but have now received mercy. The apostle Peter says, “In this the love of God was revealed among us.” And holy John says in his catholic epistle that “God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” And the blessed Paul says, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for all of us.” So he spared the people.

NOTE 38

“And all the sanctified ones are under your hands.” For he rules over all, as king of heaven and earth. They stand before him as before a king, serve him as God, and worship him as Maker, and they are under him, for “he himself has put all things under his feet.”

NOTE 39

“The rulers of the peoples gathered together.” These are the divinely inspired disciples, as David also says in their person: “He subjected peoples to us, and nations under our feet.” And again: “The rulers of the peoples were gathered together with the God of Abraham.” So this shows the calling of the nations, since God was going to rule over Israel and the nations together. The Son is called “beloved,” for “This,” he says, “is my beloved Son.” And for this reason the Father rules over us and reigns.

NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY

NOTE 1

Verse 31. "As a man [carries or feeds a child]." Aquila translated it: "As a nurse lifts up her son, he carried him." Origen, in his homilies on Jeremiah, says: "He went about with you and came down with you, making our weakness his own. He was like a teacher who lisps along with little children, like a father tenderly nursing his own sons and daughters. He took on their ways and led them little by little to more perfect and higher things."

NOTE 3

¹⁸ Verse 18. "And I commanded you." He says this to the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ²⁷ Verses 27 and 28. He gives Moses more than Aaron: to see the land with his own eyes. But he does not give him entry. He lays this penalty on him for his lack of faith. By it he removes both men from life outside the promised land, though they were able to reach it, since the end is given through faith. This is also a symbol for the law, which could not bring anyone to perfection or restore the promise, because "the righteous shall live by faith." Yet this is also an honor: to know God's judgment and to know one's own death beforehand. By the same author. He sets Jesus forward. Jesus was already made holy by following Moses and by [constant attendance] on him. But he was about to receive through Moses the ruling spirit, so that he might also [establish people as his own in Moses' place]. In the same way Elisha was present in the spirit of Elijah to do Elijah's work, for those who work in the same spirit must accomplish the same things. As he says in Numbers: "Take to yourself Jesus, son of Nave, a man who has the Spirit of God in himself, and you shall lay your hands on him." So too the apostles had the life-giving Spirit from the Lord's breathing on them, and they receive the ruling spirit sent down from heaven. This is not one spirit inside another, one upon the other, but an activity within the same Spirit, just as Paul teaches.

NOTE 4

Verse 12. "And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words." By the same author, on the same verse. Another says: It is clear that a person sees and hears thoughts with the eyes of the mind. "The sound of words": here he has stated what belongs to nature, that the ear re-

ceives the voice. As far as the strict letter goes, only the Decalogue was written on the tablets, and the rest Moses taught by God's command.

NOTE 14

Verse 19. "All the creeping things of the birds shall be unclean." Of the birds, I think, he wants those that have spurs below the knees, above the feet, to be clean, and those that do not to be unclean. So the law rules out the eagle, the griffon, the sea eagle, and also the vulture. Such birds fly high. They love to exult in the highest places and hate what is below. "The young of the vulture," it says, "fly on high." Such, in a way, is the person who has raised his brow too high and carries a mind lifted up within himself. He is accustomed to look down on a gentle and moderate way of thinking, and he is least willing to be carried along with the lowly. Along with these the law also condemns the kite and its like. By these it clearly indicates the kind of people who know how to seize and are skilled in doing harm. The kite is the original type of these, [but not of the other kind, the very black and deep one]. Those who run toward wickedness are somehow dark, not plain to everyone, and [unprofitable] to the many, though they bring misery on themselves. Those who are sick with accursed boastfulness always have a desire to get more than others. [Whatever comes by chance cannot satisfy them, nor can their many-sided schemes of wrongdoing and inventions.] So they snatch even this insatiably. For this reason he joins to it immediately: "And the sparrow, and the gull." These are insatiable, I think, always gathering whatever falls in their way. Then he says: "the hawk and its like, and the night raven, and the [diving bird], and the ibis, and the [προσφορίων], and the pelican, and the swan." He would also register against themselves these: the cruel, who plot savagely against others and fasten without restraint on whatever they happen to be able to get.

NOTE 20

5 ...one who is broken, and who has given his mind over to the desires of the flesh, could be pictured by betrothal to a woman. For when they come near the voice of the army's herald, they withdraw from the holy and most war-like multitude. The herald speaks out ahead of time what such trapped men would likely be thinking and saying. Is it not true to suppose this of them? Loving [ease], they are accustomed in persecutions to cherish freedom from toil, and [to hold back from] following the zeal that comes from love for

God. They reason that if they should suffer anything while contending, they will lose their houses, their possessions, and the things they honor and desire.

⁸ Verse 8. "Who is the man who is afraid and fainthearted?" By the same author. The man who is devoted to earthly things, who builds houses and plants vineyards, and who is overcome by the pleasures of loving the flesh, will surely be cowardly and without strength.

¹⁰ Verse 10. "But if you approach a city to make war on it." This is like the saying, "And into whatever city you enter, inquire who in it is worthy." The words "with peace" are like the apostle's saying: "The servant of the Lord must not quarrel." ¹³ Verse 13. "And you shall strike every male of it with the slaughter of the sword." By the same author. The sword of the Spirit would be the word of God. It is the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God, with which the inspired disciples killed every male of the opposing power, as with Simon and Elymas the magicians, and they overthrew the strong teachings of such men. But they spared the women, who are souls able to say: "Because of fear of you, Lord, we conceived in the womb until [we came] upon the earth." They spared the little children in the same way, to whom Paul also writes: "Little children, do not be children in your minds, but be children in malice." The text says also: "Spare the cattle." For "the righteous man pities the lives of his [cattle]." By cattle he hints at those who are less reasoning. Cornelius also was cattle, according to the vision of the four-footed creatures that appeared to Peter.

NOTE 22

Verse 6. "You shall not take the mother with the children." The reason is that the young cannot feed themselves if the mother is taken.

NOTE 23

¹ Verse 3. "No Ammonite shall enter." Why does the law forbid mixing with the Moabites and Ammonites, not for a set time but forever? First, because of their unlawful root, for they were born of an unlawful union. Second, because of the ungodliness they led the Israelites to share in, when they made their women attractive and through them caught the Israelites in the worship of idols. But the law commands that the Edomite and the Egyptian be received after the third generation: the one as a brother, the other as a benefactor who helped at the right time. For when famine struck, their fathers went into Egypt and were fed. So the law teaches us not to forget even an old

kindness. ² Verse 14. What does it mean, “Because the Lord your God walks about in your camp”? He knows that the air, when filled with foul smells, often breeds plague. So he commanded them, while encamped, to bury the waste they passed. And so that they would not disobey and suffer harm, he added, out of necessity: “Because the Lord your God walks about in your camp.” He also teaches the reason: “to [rescue] you, and to hand your enemy over before your face.” Through this he teaches them to do nothing unlawful. For he adds: “And your camp shall be holy, and nothing shameful shall be found in you.”

³ Verse 12. “And let there be a place for you,” he says, “outside the camp, and you shall go out there.” ⁴ Verse 13. “And you shall have a peg on your belt. And when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it, and turning back you shall cover your shame.” ⁵ Verse 14. “Because the Lord your God walks about in the camp to rescue you and to hand your enemy over into your hands. And your camp shall be holy, and no shameful thing will be seen in you.” Those who want to act like men against their spiritual enemies ought to refuse every kind of uncleanness. But we all stumble in many ways. Human nature is sick, and prone to slip into error. As the Psalmist says, no one understands his transgressions. [The sense of the next words is uncertain:] “Suppose one of the impurities born in us were almost to break out among you, and we, being sick, were caught in something outside the law and outside a life fitting for the holy.” For the law of sin dwells in the members of the flesh. First, then, let the faults that come from our weakness not be committed openly and in plain view, nor before the eyes of many. Let them be done, as it were, outside, unnoticed, as far from the camp as possible. Then let them be covered over by corrections. As it is written, “The wise will cover their own shame.” When we stop our offenses, and by leanings toward better things in a way set the mind in order to choose what is profitable, we remove our stumblings from the midst. We overcome the ugly sin with the sweet fragrance of what follows, and we shall enter again into the camp of the saints, that is, into the church of the firstborn. This is fulfilled in Christ, if we take up his cross with a keen and well-girded mind. For the statement that we are to have a peg on our belt, that is, the wood, hints at this indirectly. So we make the bodily things a pattern of the spiritual. For we are not [to remain] in impurities, [and to ...] before the eyes of God who made us, when we go to the latrines [the Greek of this sentence is corrupt]. We must

therefore bury impurities, “because the Lord walks about in the camp.” For Christ dwells in us and walks about in us.

NOTE 24

Verse 6. “You shall not take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for in that way he is pledging a soul.” Another comment on the same verse: a mill or an upper millstone is not a soul. But it helps in making bread, by which people above all live. Note this, because of the blood. For it was said about the blood, “The blood of the body is its soul.” So these words must be understood in a loose sense. For neither the blood nor the mill is the soul. They are things that contribute to living.

NOTE 27

¹⁵ Verse 15. “And he shall set it in a hidden place.” It was likely that some, out of fear of punishment, would take pains to go unnoticed and practice ungodliness in a corner and in secret. So, to bring greater fear and threat on those who do this, he puts under curses those who commit sin without a witness. Such are those who put on a false show of reverence but bury their passions inside, and in the movement of the mind rave wildly after every kind of absurdity. These are the ones who set up their idols in a hidden place.

¹⁷ Verse 17. “Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s boundaries.” The one who shakes a person found within the true knowledge of God and a godly way of life, and unsettles him from it, also moves his neighbor’s boundaries. And what follows makes this clear. ¹⁸ Verse 18. “Cursed is the one who leads a blind man astray on the road.” From the same author. Such also are those who draw people from idol worship, and those from the circumcision, into abominable heresies. These people are blind and have not yet had the light of truth and the knowledge of God. The heretics deceive and mislead them by showing them another road in place of the apostolic one.

¹⁹ Verse 19. “Cursed is whoever turns aside the judgment of a stranger, an orphan and a widow.” He puts under the same curse those who likewise turn aside the judgment of a stranger, an orphan and a widow, saying the same thing again in another way. For if the plain wording has its benefit, the spiritual insight has something higher still. The “strangers” are those who come from the nations into the holy Church of God. The “orphans,” properly speaking, are those who have renounced their own father, Satan, but have

not yet put on Jesus. They are still counted among the catechumens. In the same way these are also “widows.” They have turned away from the one who sowed in them the seeds of destruction, but they are not yet joined to Christ as a pure virgin, in the words of the divine Apostle. So those who turn aside the judgment of these people, and do not hand over to them the mystery of godliness unadulterated, are under a curse. And anyone who goes through the other points diligently will be able to see them spiritually, while the plain interpretation is kept safe.

²⁶ Verse 26. “Cursed is every man who does not abide in all the words of the law.” The words “in all,” found in the Septuagint, are confirmed by the Samaritan copy, in which we found the word “chol,” which means “to all” or “all things.” The Apostle agrees with this when he says, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse.” So those of the circumcision are shown to be under a curse, because they do not do all things.

NOTE 33

Verse 6. “Let Reuben live, and not die.” Jacob, when he was dying, cursed Reuben, saying, “Do not boil over like water.” Moses, in blessing, says, “Let Reuben live, and not die.” Both are right. The father cursed him because he had gone in to his concubine, and by this he was instructing and warning what followed. And Moses blesses him justly afterward, because Reuben alone spared Joseph when his brothers wanted to kill him. It would have been out of place for a curse to go forward against one who had sinned, and yet for no blessing to be given to one who had done right.

SELECTA ON JOSHUA

NOTE 1

“You, and all this people.” He promised to give what he had foretold to those who keep the law. It was not given to Joshua son of Nun for himself. For the Israelites did not keep it, and so did not receive it, as what follows shows.

NOTE 2

“Every place on which you set foot.” The men of Ai stood against them because of the lawlessness of Achar. And in another way: God handed the nations over into their hands, but they did not destroy them utterly, and these nations became a stake for them.

NOTE 3

“And they entered the house of a woman, a prostitute, whose name was Rahab.” The spies entrust their own safety to a prostitute, and quite reasonably. For it is shown from what the prostitute says that she alone was faithful and feared God. For this reason her family too is saved through her.

NOTE 4

By the same author. Rahab is interpreted “breadth.” She is a symbol of the Church from the nations, who says, “The place is too narrow for me; make room for me, that I may live.”

NOTE 5

By the same author. She is saved not by her hospitality alone, but first of all by her faith and her disposition toward God.

NOTE 6

“And she hid them in the flax stalks.” She hid them in the stalks of flax which she had on the roof, preparing them to make linen, as though the men were worthy of a high priest’s garment. For flax stalks produce the linen from which the priestly garment is made.

NOTE 7

“And she let them down through the window.” It should be known that her house was in the wall. The new things are sisters of the old: for it is like what happened with Paul, when they let him down in a basket through the wall.

NOTE 8

By the same author. The Apostle was saved a second time from enemies in the same way, as he says in his second Letter to the Corinthians: “And through a window I was let down in a basket through the wall, and escaped.” Again in the Acts: “They were also watching the gates day and night, so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.”

NOTE 9

“And they stayed there three days.” It was not that the journey took three days, for the Jordan is very near Jericho, but because of the spies’ careful investigation. For it says, “Those who pursued them searched all the roads and did not find them.”

NOTE 10

“Forty thousand men, lightly armed.” It should be noted that the number four, whether of units, or hundreds, or any larger number, is associated with affliction.

NOTE 11

“Make yourself knives of stone from a sharp-cut rock.” We must ask why those born in the wilderness were not circumcised. We must also ask why a man who gathered wood on the Sabbath in Moses’ time was stoned by God’s command. A very great multitude stayed uncircumcised in the wilderness and was not even blamed for it. Yet God had declared that the soul not circumcised on the eighth day should be destroyed, [and no longer had he laid down this same penalty for those who break the Sabbath]. Already from this it is clear that circumcision and the Sabbath are not good in themselves. They were useful for a time. We should also know that God wanted them to be recognized by circumcision, as a sign. [Since they would not bear to be made visible by faith], he marked them as a sheep without reason is marked with a brand. Even if it wanders off, its owner finds it easily. In the same way he wanted the Jews, when they mixed with the nations, to be recognized by circumcision. The proof is this: they were circumcised in Egypt. But in the wilderness they were alone, separated from the Egyptians and from the other nations around Palestine, and they stayed uncircumcised. When they crossed the Jordan and were about to be in the midst of the nations, they were commanded again to be circumcised. That is why Scripture says “a second time” that they were circumcised, not at eight days old but already grown men, and some of them leaning toward old age. The stone knife shows us the Lord, who gave us the circumcision of the understanding, the circumcision of mind and heart. This is why the Apostle also spoke to us of the circumcision of Christ, not consisting in the stripping off of our flesh.

NOTE 12

“I am the commander-in-chief of the power of the Lord; I have come now.” We should remember what happened when they made the calf. God said to Moses, “Lead this people up, for I will not go up with them, because the people are stiff-necked. And see, I will send my angel before your face. So take heed to yourself, and do not disobey.” Moses said to him, “If you do not go up with us, do not lead me up from here.” By saying this he persuaded

him, and God was with the people until Moses' death. After Moses died, he appears and speaks with Jesus son of Nave. After this oversight of the people [was committed] to Moses' disciple, he then hands [the people] over to the commander-in-chief Michael. This Michael was ruler of the people, as another angel is shown saying in Daniel.

NOTE 13

"Going and sounding trumpets." These trumpets are a symbol of what happens on the last day. For he says, "The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." The priests circling the city for six days would be a sign of this: through the six days of the present age, all the saints sound the trumpet and proclaim forgiveness of sins to those who are willing to repent.

NOTE 14

"And Jesus said to the sons of Israel, 'Shout.'" The shout is probably the giving of glory in words, a voice of praise to God. It fights against the error of the people of Jericho, and it wins a victory that no one expected, one full of wonder.

NOTE 15

"Thus did Ozan." This shows that it was not Jesus son of Nave who wrote these things, but someone else, many generations later. Rightly understood, this is true, and it does not contradict what we said earlier. Jesus wrote what happened in his own time, or what was revealed to him, just as Moses wrote what belonged to his own times. After this, Solomon the wise built the temple. Then the people sank into great impiety, and God left the temple desolate, so that Deuteronomy was scarcely found, thrown aside wherever it happened to land. For this reason the people went into the Babylonian captivity. Ezra, who was most skilled in the law and spoke the whole Old Testament from memory, wrote down the law and some other things that had happened or been revealed. These things were foretold long ago, and afterward they came to pass. What we have just mentioned is surely of this kind.

NOTE 16

"I am still strong today, as when Moses sent me." So the holy man is strong in both kinds of words. He is strong in the old mysteries and in the new. This is what it means to be strong under Moses and under Jesus.

NOTES ON JOSHUA

NOTE 3

Verse 14. “And all the people set out from their tents.” That is, [like the filling of a threshing floor]. For [the water] was not only made firm, as in the Red Sea, but was heaped up like a pile of wheat. This is evidently a type of the apostles.

NOTE 6

Verses 15–16. “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.” Why did he command that Jericho be put under the ban? It was the first city they captured after crossing the river. So just as he commanded them to offer the firstfruits of the crops, he ordered them to offer the choicest of the spoils as first offerings. Besides this, through these laws he trains them to keep the laws that are necessary. He also showed them his own power by arranging for them to take the first city without weapons or siege engines, and he brought it down by the sound of the trumpets alone. So when they are defeated in battle, they would know that they themselves gave the occasion for the defeat, by despising the divine laws.

NOTE 8

² Verse 2. “And you shall plunder the livestock for yourself.” This is because it was not necessary, as at Jericho, for everything to be devoted to destruction. ²⁶ Verse 26. “And Joshua stretched out the spear, and his hand.” Joshua kept his hand stretched out so that the men in the ambush, when they saw it, would take the city first.

NOTES ON JUDGES

NOTE 15

Verse 19. “And God split open the wound in the jaw, and water came out of it.” That is: by the blow of the jawbone he split the ground, and waters came out.

NOTE 20

Verse 21. “And the sons of Benjamin came out.” Why were they defeated, even though they went out against them justly? Evidently because of earlier causes. The psalm also says: “When I take the appointed time, I will judge up-

rightly.” Then he says that after they were defeated once and a second time, the anger passed over to the wrongdoers, and the Israelites won a just judgment. It is worth marveling at the multitude of the Israelites. They attacked the Benjaminites justly and were defeated, yet they thought nothing evil against God. Rather, they did not stop weeping beforehand until they had exacted justice on the wrongdoers. They did not blame God, but said, “But this is enough.” They begged to learn the way [to proceed]. The saying “Benjamin is a ravening wolf; in the morning he will eat, and in the [evening] he will distribute food” is fulfilled here. For though he had won earlier, he became the final meal of the people.

FRAGMENTS ON 1 SAMUEL

NOTE 1

1 Sam. 3:11–21. The divine Scripture was about to foretell the destruction of the sons of Eli, and that the ark of God would be taken by the Philistines. So it first soothes the hearing, lest anyone think God is harsh. For this reason, as I said, it records that the wickedness and sin of Eli’s sons were not lessened by the threat and by the prediction [made against them], but rather increased.

NOTE 2

1 Sam. 4:13. Eli was devout in himself. His great anxiety was not first of all for the safety of his children but for the ark, that it might never fall into the hands of the Philistines. And that is exactly what happened.

NOTE 3

1 Sam. 5:3. This was so that the Philistines would know that God had not been defeated by the Israelites, and that they had not conquered him by their own power. It was the sins and ungodliness of the Jews that brought about the defeat. And Dagon fell before the ark, not in order to worship, for he was not worthy, but in order to be shattered. And so it happened.

NOTE 4

^{1a}1 Sam. 15:9–11. In human beings, “hand,” “foot,” “eye,” “ear” and whatever else is so named are signs of the parts of our body. In God, “hand” means the power to create, “eye” the power to oversee, “ear” the power to hear, and “foot” his presence when he is doing something. In the same way, God’s “anger” is the name for discipline against those who offend, and is not

a passion in God. And “repentance” is the shift of God’s arrangement from one matter to another. What we do when we repent is flee the things we repented of and pursue others that are better. This is what is called God’s repentance. Why is it put this way? Because the prophets had to speak about God in a rather bodily manner to people of very dull mind, so that it could be received. For those who thought the images they carved and cast were gods, and who were indeed irrational, how could they have taken in what is said about God through spiritual thoughts and words? And again: if God foresees all things, he does not become angry because of what he knows. So anger or repentance is not a passion of God. The work of anger is punishment, and likewise the work of repentance is a departure from the former matter and a shift to another arrangement. The same is said about the sword: [a sword is “sharpened”], and Solomon speaks of a “hand” of iron: “to rescue you from the hand of iron,” and, as David says, of a sword: “into the hands of the sword.”

^{1b} In the same way God’s anger is said to be “angry,” and sin is said, in David, to have a “face.” God’s wrath too is said to have a “face,” as in the thirty-seventh Psalm, and the rivers are said to clap with their hands. But rivers have no hands, and sins have no face. So, because things are said about God in bodily terms (as the ancients could take them in), let us not suppose that God has a body or that he is filled with passions. {It is the easy turning of the human mind that explains this. For it is we ourselves who bring about, in our own case, the changes in God’s dealings that rightly come upon us, showing by our deeds that we are unworthy of the honor God gave us. So God condemned Saul. He wished to hand the rule to David and to keep the kingdom for his offspring, because of the one who would be born of him according to the flesh, the King of all creation. He used human words, speaking to human beings, and said, “I have repented that I anointed Saul king.” That means: “I wish to give the rule of the kingdom to another, and to take from this man his power.” The words “I have repented,” said on account of Saul, mean this: he made himself so unworthy of the kingdom that, if I had a nature that repents, I would have changed my mind about him. Why then was he anointed? Because at that time he was worthy. But he turned, and became unworthy again.

NOTE 5

From this is shown what I said before: God's "repentance" means a change in God's plan of dealing, from one course of action to another. {The passage shows that even when a prophet, a righteous man, pleads on behalf of others, he is heard only if the one he pleads for shows his repentance by action. For the prayer of the righteous man is effective in this way, as it is worked out through the one who sinned. So for the matter to be brought to its end, both must come together: the prayer of the righteous man and the work of the one who repents.

NOTE 6

Esau was red, like a skin [text corrupt], having deadness from it and raging murderously against Jacob. But David was red with beautiful eyes, so that the [text corrupt: the keen-sightedness] of David might [be shown].

NOTE 7

How could he be a man of valor, how could he be shrewd in speech, how could he be a warrior, when he was still tending sheep? So the speaker did not speak from himself. He foretold what was to come as though it were already present, and he testified of David what he was going to be. But as for "the Lord is with him" and "good in appearance," these were true from childhood and remained: the one by nature, the other by grace.

NOTE 8

Saul was powerful and had a crowd of helpers to do evil against David, while only two were being hunted, Samuel and David. So God's grace made Saul prophesy, not only what concerned himself but also what was in David's favor. It also cast him down naked, signifying in advance that he would be stripped of the kingdom.

NOTE 9

Here "common" does not mean the unclean but those that are not holy, in contrast with the holy loaves set out on the table. For the table always held six loaves, changed regularly, on behalf of the twelve tribes of Israel. They called these the loaves "of the presence." So each loaf was offered for two tribes, and the six together for the twelve tribes. What good came of this? The tribes of Israel were joined together in harmony. What better thing was foreshadowed? The blessed apostles were sent out by the Savior two by two to

preach first among the tribes of Israel, so that six pairs made up the number of the twelve disciples. {"Lay bread" is so called not because those who are not holy are profane, but because they are being compared [with the holy ones].

NOTE 10

1 Samuel 21:5–6. "Today it will be made holy because of the vessels." He said this rather obscurely, but it means the following. "My young men have been made holy and have kept away from a woman both yesterday and the day before." This is what his saying that the young men were purified amounts to. If they had not been, they would certainly have been made holy by eating the bread of the presentation. The priest believed what was said and gave David some of the loaves, which no one but the priests alone was allowed to eat. This belongs to prophecy that speaks through deeds. The royal tribe, that is Judah, was one tribe and the priestly tribe another. [The text here is unclear: "I mean the one with which they were going to be joined."] The priestly dignity and the royal were to be joined and made one at the coming of our Savior from David, [who is both priest] and king together, according to the order of Melchizedek.

NOTE 11

1 Samuel 21:7. "The Neessar." This shows either that Doeg the Edomite stayed there because of sin, being [attended to] and confessing before the Lord, or that, being demon-possessed like Saul, he was not [really] pasturing the mules.

NOTE 12

1 Samuel 21:7. Saul bears the type of the evil spirit. Israel had begun by saying then, "We have no king." For the people of old despised the Lord who was their king, [and so] Saul was given to them as ruler. [The Greek here is repetitive and probably corrupt.]

NOTE 13

1 Samuel 25:22. No one urinates standing and against a wall unless he is at leisure. So this phrase describes the carefree man who expects to suffer nothing, if he belongs to Nabal.

NOTE 14

1 Samuel 28:11–12. The woman with the ventriloquist spirit did not bring Samuel up, for that is impossible. Nor did the one who came up speak the truth. Who this was, and by what power he came up, you should investigate.

NOTE 15

2 Samuel 5:6–8. David was besieging Jebus. Jebus was the name of what is now Jerusalem, when it was under foreigners. The Jebusites knew that David was a lover of the poor. So they set blind and lame men on the wall above to insult him. But when David took Jerusalem, he was so far from treating these disabled people badly that he laid down a law for his soldiers, with death as the penalty, if anyone tried to kill a blind or lame man. For he says, “Everyone who strikes a lame or blind Jebusite, let him touch him with the dagger,” that is, let him be put to death. For even though they hated David’s soul, they received mercy. Therefore he is thought worthy of honor from all [the text is unclear here], while those who insulted David, and whom he spared, say: “The lame and the blind shall not enter the house of the Lord.”

NOTE 16

2 Samuel 5:14. Note that Nathan, David’s son, was born to him after he captured Jerusalem and settled there. This is the Nathan whose line the blessed Luke traces, while the blessed Matthew traces the line of his brother Solomon. So from this, I mean from the sons of David mentioned here, one evangelist gives one genealogy and the other gives another.

NOTE 17

2 Samuel 16:10–12. So from this too it is shown that what God does not do, but permits to happen, is said to have been done by him. It is agreed, then, that Absalom’s uprising, Shimei’s abuse, and his throwing stones at David were not God’s work. David’s words show more plainly what I mean: “Let him curse, because the Lord has told him to, so that he may see my humiliation. And the Lord will repay me good in place of his cursing on this day.” For it is clear that what was happening did not please God. And what did not please him, he would not have commanded to be done.

NOTE 18

If Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, tried to destroy the Gibeonites, with whom Joshua son of Nun and all the people had made a covenant, and for

that reason seven of Saul's descendants, born of his daughters, were put to death, why were the tribes not held to blame? Why did people who had done no wrong pay the penalty? That seems unjust. Unless someone says that Saul, being king, was unable to stand against his fellow citizens and the tribe of Judah, and so could not keep the covenant the fathers had made with the Gibeonites. I would add to this that it was God's own ordering that the whole family of Saul should be wiped out, everyone who at any time might be suspected of claiming the royal dignity and so of rising up against David and his sons. The words "the Gibeonites exposed them to the sun before the Lord on the mountain" mean that they killed them and did not bury them, but left them lying under the sun. "And they were loosened," it says, "and Dan son of Joash, one of the descendants of the giants, took them." He surely means that the giant took up the bodies that had been laid out under the sun, already broken down by the heat of the sun. {The story about the Gibeonites remains unknown. [Here] we might say that when Saul was encamped at Gabee to make war, he routed the foreigners and destroyed the Gibeonites along with them. The account is in the thirty-second, thirty-third and thirty-seventh [chapters] of First Kingdoms, where it says, "and he fought all his enemies on every side," and so on. What the text says is this: Saul did wrong against [them], and from that same [act] came the vengeance for the injustice [done in the time of] Joshua. Those who received their being from him are not wronged when they are destroyed together with the one who stood at the beginning. For they have their non-being from the same source from which they had their being. But if they were worthy of some good because of their own conduct, they receive it later.}

NOTE 19

The question is asked how David, who had pardoned Shimei, commands Solomon to kill him. David was a man who held no grudges and was gentle. He gives the same command about Joab, who had labored together with him. Why, then, was this arranged in this way? David was wise, and he knew that Solomon would not let Shimei live, for fear of an uprising. For Shimei, from a position of royal dignity, would fight Solomon over the kingdom. Nor would Solomon let Joab live, since Joab had set up David's son as king apart from David's own mind. Joab had also killed Abner, though he had labored together with the father in many wars and had succeeded. David foresaw all this. So he got ahead of events and ordered Solomon to do what Solomon

would certainly have done on his own. Then, when the men named were put to death by Solomon, he would be forgiven, as one who had carried out his father's wish and had not moved against them on his own account.

NOTE 20

"And he turned back," it says, "and slept. And the angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him." Perhaps these were symbols of powers serving the prophet with food fitting for him. He was withdrawing from human affairs and was worthy of being taught by such beings. After this he would be able to hear, "Arise and eat," and would find at his head unspeakable mysteries, of which the barley cake baked in the ashes was a type. And does he not eat a second time, at the angel's command, when the angel said, "Arise, eat, for the journey is long for you"? [...] Now the [food of] the morning they brought to Elijah [...] in keeping with what the Lord had said to Moses, among which was this: "In the morning you will be filled with bread, and you will know that I am the Lord your God." And [the other food] likewise: "Toward evening you shall eat meat."

NOTE 21

This is the power of Christ Jesus, which makes men into sons. And if anyone is a man of power, he is clearly a son of Christ. But at times the powers under Christ cannot make sons. And if they do, they make not grown men but infants.

NOTE 22

"Spadontes" means eunuchs. He says this about the three young men and Daniel, that they were descended from this Hezekiah.

SELECTA ON JOB

NOTE 1

Chapter 1. "The horsemen made three heads for us and surrounded the camels." So he made the camels fall under the horsemen. The donkeys and the yoked oxen he put under those who took captives. The sheep he hated, and for that reason he brought fire down on them. He was also plotting against the sons, and he was looking for a moment to destroy them. If he had found them reading, he would not have touched the house, and he would have had no ground to kill them. If he had found them praying, he could have done nothing against them. But when he found an opportunity,

he prevailed. What was that opportunity? It was drunkenness; it was a banquet. As for the Spirit's mention of the corners being struck, take note that hypocrites stand and pray in the broad places of the corners. Everyone who has not set foot on the straight way makes use of corners. A broad corner is wickedness that is great and unrestrained.

NOTE 19

^{1a} Chapter 19. "How long will you wear out my soul?" Heavy loads laid on the bodies of animals make the animals that carry them grow weary. In the same way there are some heavy words. When someone hears them, he grows weary, as if pressed down by the weight of what the words can do. These are words spoken with reproach and harshness, or in abuse. So it is now with the words spoken by Baldad. Job felt them like a heavy burden, and being worn out in his soul he says, "How long will you wear out my soul?" and, "Will you weigh down your words against me like a heavy load?" You see that the words of the tyrant of the Shuhites were tyrannical words, and Job, hearing them, says what is set before us. For nothing else strikes a person's soul as a harsh word does. Often someone has endured tortures inflicted on his body and yet has not endured words. The perfect athlete, though he grows weary, still endures harsh words. To endure insult is the mark of a great man. That is why the Apostle, among his own deeds of courage, says, "When reviled, we bless; when slandered, we appeal." Here too it is Job, the noblest of athletes, who speaks. His book contains nothing so remarkable as his courage and his endurance.

^{1b} Even so, he feels the weariness he has suffered from the harsh word of those who came to visit him. The heaviness of a word is like a burden laid on the soul and makes it weary. That is why he says: "Why, my friends, do you add the toil of the soul to the pains of the body, pricking me more with your words than the sufferings prick the body?" "You speak against me." Often someone speaks against another when that other is doing wrong. But when he has lost all shame, he says it to his face, not to expose him or to tell the truth, but to reproach and insult him. "I will cry out, and nowhere is there judgment." If I cry out now, my judgment does not come anywhere. I am still contending. It is as if he were saying: "I have cried out like an athlete in the stadium, and my judgment does not arise anywhere, for I am still wrestling. If I do not finish the match, the judgment that brings the crown does not come." We say this so that we do not accuse God because Job suffers so

much and “nowhere is there judgment.” That is, there is nowhere any decision granting him freedom and release from his troubles.

NOTE 20

^{1a} Chapter 20. “If his gifts go up to heaven.” The heretic too: when he prays, when his sacrifice goes up with lofty speech, when he seems to be firmly established, then in the end he will perish. For his prayer is counted to him as sin. We who belong to the Church and know his errors will say: where are such people, who dream and fashion errors for themselves? In their stumbling they do not rest their mind on the truth. They become like a dream that has flown away, which will not be found. David sings something similar: “But the enemies of the Lord have failed. At the very moment of being glorified and exalted, they failed; like smoke they failed.” And again: “Like a dream of those who awake.” “Wealth gathered unjustly will be vomited up.” I know of another wealth that is gathered unjustly, the wealth found in the words of the heretics. They hold teachings in their bellies that are opposed to the doctrines of the truth. These are not sweet but are “the gall of asps,” that is, they are evil. It is said in Deuteronomy, in the song of Moses, about the wine of their teaching: “For their vine is from the vine of Sodom.” But the good God will not allow them to keep unjustly gathered wealth in themselves forever. He will make them vomit it up. For by God’s kindness an angel will drag them out onto the very house that was badly built:

^{1b} That house is the church of the wicked. So Job goes on: “Out of his house,” and so on. See how much is laid up even for the one who holds other teaching, because of his ungodly doctrines. Let us therefore watch ourselves, so that we are not robbed by plausible arguments from heretical teaching and fall away from the mystery of the Church. “May he not see the milking of the herdsmen.” The one who teaches other doctrine does not see the milking of herdsmen either. The herdsmen are souls that are pastured under the good shepherd and find pasture. The doctrines against God have nothing sweet in them; they are harsh and dense. For “he shattered the houses of many who were powerless.” And if the teacher of other doctrine finds you anywhere weak in the faith, weak in sound teaching, he robs you. It is truly said of the teacher of those who hold other doctrines that he shattered the houses of many who were powerless. He snatches away the way of life of the easily deceived, and afterward he cannot make it stand, for falsehood cannot make anything stand. “May a day of wrath come upon him.” On that day the

divine judgment is stirred up against him. Whether it is the man from the circumcision who has acted impiously against God, or the one who holds other doctrine, or anyone ungodly in whatever way, his portion is the one shown in what was said above.

NOTE 21

“Why do the ungodly live, and grow old even in wealth?” By saying “grow old in wealth,” he means that they are not newly rich. From youth to old age they have gone on being wealthy. “They take up the psaltery and the harp.” Fathers have another kind of happiness, and so do their children, a joy filled out by pipes, harps and drums. These charm the ears, stir up the pleasures of the soul, and bewitch those present with undisciplined music. The children of the ungodly make it shamelessly, laying their hands on the tightened strings and clapping to the sound of the instruments. “They finished their life in good things.” That is, they had no break in their prosperity. They went on to the end of a full life, luxuriating in bodily goods. The end of their life became the end of their happiness, since their good fortune lasted until death. “And they fell asleep in the rest of Hades.” That is, resting and cheerful until death, they go down to Hades untroubled. Or it means that death itself is not bitter to them; they die as though falling asleep. Or it means that other people suffer and are worn down while they live, and rest only when they die, whereas these men, of whom he is speaking, spent their whole life in good cheer and so came to the rest that is in death.

NOTE 22

^{1a} Chapter 22. “Is it not the Lord who teaches?” This is a sound teaching: a human being cannot be the true teacher of virtue. The one who teaches a person knowledge is, as it is also written in the Psalms, none other than God. God teaches by shining into the soul of the one who learns from him, and by lighting up the mind with the true light, his own Word. So even if righteous men teach us, having received the grace of teaching, it is still the Lord who teaches us through them. Even the understanding itself, and the opening of our hearts to receive the divine lessons, comes about by divine grace. “Or will he reprove you, making an account of you?” To this we would say that God does not reprove the ungodly because he worries that he himself might be harmed. He reproves him because he takes account of the one he provides for and does good to. “You took pledges from your brothers for

nothing.” Eliphaz supposes this about Job, because he knew he was rich and suspected that he had grown rich from sources of this kind. So he says, “You took pledges for nothing,” that is, when nothing was owed to you. Then, adding to this, he charges him with another sin: “You stripped the naked of their clothing.” Sometimes one may take garments from someone who is not naked but rich, who has many clothes laid up. But suppose someone has only one tunic, and I strip him of that tunic on the excuse of demanding what is mine, having no pity on that naked man. Then I have taken away the clothing of a naked man. Many such things happen among us when we lend, when we have people in debt to us. Often our debtor is desperately poor and cannot repay. And we shut up our compassion. We do not see that he is feeding a wife and children, and that they are barely fed from the few small coins he gets. Yet we demand payment harshly, sometimes even when we have more than enough ourselves. So Eliphaz brings this charge against Job: “You stripped the naked of their clothing.” Perhaps he also calls it taking away when someone does not give a cloak to the naked. For the person who does not clothe the naked, and the one who does not feed the person who needs bread, is a defrauder and a greedy man.

^{1b} “And you admired the faces of certain people.” This too is another sin, for admiring a person’s face is a sin. Someone is rich, so I admire his face, but I trample on the poor man because he has no standing. “So the Almighty will be your helper.” Eliphaz states a sound teaching here. He thinks Job is suffering because of his sins, and that by enduring he is purified through the suffering itself. Purified like gold in a furnace, he is shown to be approved, having put away everything foreign and become unmixed with any evil. So Eliphaz says that if you also endure what has happened to you, God will give you back purified, like refined silver. And once purified, you will have boldness, as one who has put away his sins. You will lift your face cheerfully to heaven and make your prayers with a conscience that does not condemn you. If you vow or promise anything to God, he will strengthen you to carry out your promises to him. For he is “the one who works in us both the willing and the working, for the sake of his good pleasure.” Where the text reads “He will grant you to fulfil your vows,” Theodotion rendered it, “And you will decree a word, and it will stand for you.” That is, whatever you arrange and set down will not fall through. To put it simply, God will provide you with a whole way of life that suits a righteous man. All your ways will

prosper, guided by the divine light, or else your deeds will be bright and glorious. “Because he humbled himself, and you will say, ‘He was arrogant.’” Eliphaz seems to speak about someone else, but the word is aimed at Job. He means that these things will come to the one who repents, because he humbled himself and said that he justly underwent what he suffered, since he had been arrogant. “And he will save the one with downcast eyes.” That is, the humble-minded man, who looks down because of a troubled conscience and lack of boldness, like the tax collector who was justified in the Gospels.

NOTE 27

Chapter 27. Job added this in his opening words: the devil received authority over Job and tested him night and day. First he did it through things outside him, then through his own body, and after that through his friends. When he had tried Job through his wife and saw that Job was not beaten, he brought three friends. They were not enemies, and they did not hold scheming doctrines. What they said was true, but it was not offered in the right way or at the right time. Through them he wanted to make the righteous man say something against Providence, to turn him to impiety because of his labors and to make him lose heart because of his pains. But look at what this unbreakable man of steel says after the words of the three. Eliphaz had finished three speeches, Bildad three, and Zophar two. Job says: “I am not conscious of having done anything out of place.” Paul said the same thing later, and added: “But I am not justified by this.” The righteous man spoke with great confidence, both about his former life and about his conduct at the time of his trial, so that he could say: I am conscious of nothing against myself.

NOTE 29

Chapter 29. “The mighty ceased speaking.” Or, according to the rest of the editions, “the rulers.” [These words are corrupt or obscure in the Greek; I give the sense.] “...what was conceived...” The same thing happens in the soul that loves learning. It conceives the word, and as the word is declared it shapes it and gives it form in order. When, after shaping and forming it, the soul hands it over complete, then it gives birth. Until it gives birth, it is weighed down in labor. “I will speak, that I may find rest, opening my lips.” The one who has an understanding hearer, and is full of words, finds rest in speaking. He has, as it were, emptied himself and thrown off the excess.

NOTE 35

^{1a} Chapter 35. “Look up to heaven.” The one who looks up to heaven is not the one who lifts his bodily eyes and sees the sky. Dogs and donkeys have that kind of looking up. No lover of the world looks up to heaven. Only the one who loves neither the world nor the things in the world does. Again, the clouds are not simply high above us. But if I look at the life of Moses and how he pleased God, and then at my own smallness and lowliness, I see the cloud high above me. If I come to Jesus the son of Nave, and to the lives of the prophets, and examine their deeds, then I do what is written and learn how high the clouds are above me. “If you sinned, what will you do?” So he asks: do you know, if you have sinned, what you will do to undo the sin? If you sinned in words, heal it with better words. If you sinned in deeds, heal yourself with different deeds. But if our lawless acts are many and incurable, then it is for the incurable things, which we cannot heal ourselves, that Jesus Christ came from heaven, to heal what cannot be healed. So the words come true: “Blessed are those whose sins have been forgiven.”

^{1b} “He who sets night watches.” See how Elihu goes through praises and hymns of God, saying of him, “He who sets night watches.” Do you want to see how God sets night watches? This whole age is night; it is darkness. The light is being kept for you. For now you see through a mirror, but one day you will see the light. So the whole age is night, and there is need of appointed watchmen, so that the watchmen of the night may guard those who are in the night from robbers, from wild beasts and from enemies. Who are the watchmen? The angels who encamp around us. “He who separates me from the four-footed creatures of the earth.” According to the others: “teaching us above the beasts of the earth, and making us wise above the birds that fly through the air.” For man alone is honored with reason. By the account of creation, then, we have been set apart from all living creatures. But if you are a sinner, a fornicator, inclined downward, you have not been separated from the four-footed creatures of the earth. You have been compared with the beasts and have become like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, and like the stallion mad after mares.

NOTE 40

^{1a} Chapter 40. “No, gird up your loins like a man.” The full prizes of the contest are kept for those who have competed well, and they come after this

life. Even so, God's grace already gives the contestants a down payment. So when Job fought the greatest fights, God gave him a foretaste and a pledge of the prizes. Job lost his possessions and glorified the one who had given them. He buried his children and thanked the one who had taken them. He fell sick, so that worms poured out of his body, and he was still not beaten by his sufferings. Then God spoke with him out of a cloud and a storm. Job had heard the earlier words. He ought to have answered God, but he stayed silent, as one who had no boldness to speak. He did not yet know the saying, "Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice." Yet God gives him freedom to speak. His kindness is so great that he takes on the face of one who is not judging but being judged together with the man. Other passages of Scripture teach this too, such as "Come, let us reason together," and "My people, what have I done to you?" God is already giving Job a prize, because he questions a human being, asks him for an answer, and gives him authority to reply. If Job had not been victorious, he would not have received it. If he had not endured, he would not have heard, "Gird up your loins like a man." Do not keep silent. Be courageous in facing the questions. For whoever has loins that are not girded and tightened but loose cannot answer God reasonably. So let no one answer God until he has become a man, mature in spiritual stature, and has girded his loins.

^{1b} "Do not set aside my judgment." Do not suppose that what you endured was decided against you without reason, and do not set my judgment aside. Let us remember this saying as a useful one whenever God judges that we should suffer something: to lose a child, to lose a position of authority, to fall ill in the body, or to undergo anything of that kind. None of these things can happen to us unless God judges it so. Since none of them happens apart from God's judgment, he says to the one who suffers, "Do not set aside my judgment." That is, do not disown what I decided about you. He means the present dealing. "Do you think I have dealt with you for any other reason than that you might be shown to be righteous?" I make my defense to you: you were righteous, but you were not plainly seen to be. You had endurance, and I had to give an occasion for your endurance to shine. You had courage, but it was hidden in you, and the troubles that came on you showed your courage. Let us remember these things in times of hardship. Let us take it that we hear God present and saying to us, "Do you think I have dealt with you," that is, allowed the trial, "for any other reason than that your right-

eousness might be made clear to those who do not know it?" "Take up your height." The lines can also be understood like this: you have defeated the tempter. Take back your height. Take back your strength. Be crowned. Put on splendor. The insolent one marched out against you, but you humbled the proud one and turned him back far away in shame, together with his battle line.

NOTE 41

^{1a} Chapter 41. "Will you play with him as with a bird? Or will you bind him like a sparrow for a child?" This describes the end of a great, strong and perfect soul. The dragon has been handed over to such a soul like a sparrow to a child. He cannot even hurt the child, since the child leads him about bound wherever it wishes and carries him around. In the same way, by the grace of the Lord, Satan has been bound like a sparrow in the hand for the little ones and nursing babies, out of whose mouth God has prepared praise. "Nations will feed on him." The Lord is food for the faithful, and in the same way the dragon is food for the ungodly: "You gave him as food to the Ethiopian peoples." That is, to the sons of darkness, to those who live in ignorance. For with every word we accept, we are eating either from the dragon, if we accept a vain report, or from Christ, if we accept a word that builds up and benefits. "And all that sail together will not carry one hide of his tail." To say it more plainly: men who use their bodies as ships cannot by themselves put to death the dragon's final and last parts. But when divine power watches over us, we are able both to bring him in whole and to put him to death. Each of us puts the devil to death, as far as it depends on himself, according to the saying, "God will crush Satan under your feet quickly." "Who could enter into the fold of his breastplate?" The breastplate is also called the chest, where the ruling part is. His breastplate is not simple. It is deceitful and folded over. But a holy person is able to expose him and show that it is folded over,

^{1b} for to the holy person it is not folded. "And a spirit will not pass through him." "Will not pass through" does not mean that it does not go through and pass on. It means that nothing escapes him, and everyone must come through him. So let us prepare ourselves not to be held fast by him. "And his eyes are the appearance of the morning star." His eyes are not morning stars, but "the appearance of the morning star." For he disguises himself as an angel of light. He pretends to be a heavenly star, and pretends to be a sign of day. "Like burning lamps." I think that all the ungodly who

bring in godless doctrines are the mouth of the dragon. But something further can also be understood figuratively here, namely where destructive words come from. Suppose you have ever heard a speech that accuses the Creator under the pretext of Christianity. Say it advocates the teachings of Marcion, Valentinus or Basilides. When they speak evil of the Maker of heaven and earth, or say anything like it, you will see that firebrands come out of the mouths of such men. So let us guard ourselves, lest those lamps burn us, lest the coals of their fire touch us. “Before him runs destruction.” Destruction is like his forerunner and bodyguard. Wherever he is coming, his destruction runs ahead, and only then does he himself enter. Unless someone first receives destruction, he does not receive the dragon. For when someone sins, then, with itching ears, he seeks teachers, since he is on his way to ruin. In seeking teachers, after he has been ruined he finds the dragon, and receives into his own soul one who is filled with so many evils.

NOTE 42

Chapter 42. “And the Lord gave double.” Whoever endures every trial receives rewards for his endurance, all of them double what he had before. But the Lord gives rewards that are not merely double but a hundredfold. Yet Job would not have received double what he had before, if he had not shown double the virtue.

FRAGMENTS ON EZEKIEL

NOTE 30

The arms of Pharaoh are evil in the practice of sin, and, in the doctrines of ungodliness, the mind of the flesh. God, being good, crushes these arms. Pharaoh is a symbol of the devil, the ruler of sin among men. The Lord crushes the arm of sinners so that they cannot take hold of a sword.

NOTE 32

⁶ This especially shows the allegorical meaning of the Scripture. Pharaoh, in bodily terms, could not water the land from his excrement. Rather, it is the filthy discharge of the adversary that waters earthly things. ²³ The Hebrew has “in the length of the pit.” For the word *yarekh*, pronounced with the aspirate in the Hebrew language, means both “thigh” and “length.” [Its application to the assembly, or gathering, is uncertain in the Greek.] So he calls the depth of the burial a “pit,” and the extent of the burial its “length.”

NOTE 44

4. Ezekiel, the son of man, describes many gates, and about each one he gave some account. Here he speaks, to those who have ears, about the gate of the sanctuary that faces east. Of this gate it is written, "This gate shall be shut," and so on. It is not only that the Lord, the God of Israel, passes through the gate and so it is shut. The prince also sits in that gate to eat before the Lord, by the way of Ailam, which is translated "the porch of the gate." The gate is a shut gate: it is the mysteries of God, which cannot be locked up. Knowledge has a key, as the Lord says to the lawyers. So the gate is shut to ordinary people, for what lies inside the gate is what "eye has not seen and ear has not heard," and so on. The words in Isaiah about the sealed book carry a meaning like that of this gate. You will find this same book more plainly in the Revelation of John, together with what is written about it, and how the one from the tribe of Judah, and he alone, opened these things. For until our Lord Jesus Christ came, the law and the prophetic word were shut. A covering lay over them: the stone of hardness, which Jacob removed from the well. For in many places Scripture has opened up the meaning concerning this gate.

PART THREE

Gospels and Song of Songs: Fragments

*Short comments on John, Luke, Matthew and the Song of
Songs, copied by later compilers.*

Fragments on the Gospel of John

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 231–250

Origen's great commentary on John survives only in part. These are 142 fragments of it that were copied into Greek commentary-chains (*catenae*), where a later compiler set down the comments of several Fathers on each verse. They are printed in Preuschen's edition as the work of Origen; as with any *catena*, a fragment may be shortened or reworded by the compiler. We found no English translation.

FRAGMENT 1

^{1a} On John 1:1. By presenting him as the Maker of all things, John names him with the title "Word." Nearly all skilled making depends on reason. So the only fitting way to show that he is the maker of all things was to call him by the name of something that belongs to those who make [than as one who has an art] (and an art is a productive state joined with sound reason). The Son of God is none other than the craftsman of wisdom and skill, so he is rightly called Word. He is not a being of some other substance, distinct from the Word, who makes things that exist through the Word. He himself is the one who makes, being God the Word. Then, because this Word, who is God by nature and by that very fact the Son of God, became a human being for the salvation of human beings, the Word was also named "Flesh." Some have fallen away from the right faith and suppose that he exists only from the time he came forth from the virgin as a man. Against such people the theologian very properly writes "In the beginning was the Word." He also chooses his verbs to fit: he uses "became" for the flesh and "was" for his divinity. It would have been more exact to say "is" of the Word of God. But the incarnation took place at a certain time, and the evangelist was showing the existence of the Word in contrast to it. So he used "was" in place of "is." We must not take the strict meanings of verbs over to things that are eternal. Sometimes the things these verbs signify have an existence measured by time:

“was” refers to what no longer is, “is” to what exists now, and “will be” to what is going to exist. But the Word of God is eternal, since he is God. So the verbs used of him must not be taken as adding any notion of time, because what they signify is not under time.

^{1b} We can hunt out the author’s meaning from the theologian’s own words. Right at the start of his writing he says “In the beginning was the Word,” for in the beginning he was making heaven and earth. If “all things came to be through him,” and heaven and earth were among all things, then he was their creator when they were brought into being. Next, John did not say “in the beginning of some particular thing the Word was.” So we must take it in the widest sense, so that what is shown is this: the Word was in the beginning of the angels, and in the beginning of the archangels. In short, the Word was in the beginning of all created things, visible and invisible, being the beginning and the maker of them all. For in Christ “all things were created,” those “in the heavens and those on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether principalities or authorities or thrones or lordships. All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” If all things hold together in him, and he is before them, being the beginning of them as the cause of their being, then it follows that we must say he was present when all things were brought into being. How could he fail to be before them, and at the beginning of their existence, if he is their creator? Then, since John said that he was in the beginning, he also had to show how, and in relation to whom, the Word was when he did the making. So to “In the beginning was the Word” he added “The Word was with God.” When he came to us, born of a virgin, he had been sent by the Father. Therefore “he pitched his tent among us,” and he has this very name, “God with us.” But when he created, he was not sent by the Father as a man to bring all things into being. He was with God, and he was God. The Son of God is also called wisdom, “created as the beginning of the ways of God,” according to the writing of Proverbs. The reason is that the wisdom of God, being with the one whose wisdom it is, had no relation to anyone else. Rather, [having come to be] by the good pleasure of God, he willed that created things should exist.

^{1c} So this Wisdom chose to take on a creative relationship toward the things that were to come into being. That is what is meant by saying that she

was created as “the beginning of the ways of God.” On these ways he travels: ordering, providing for, doing good to, and giving favors to all beings, in this Wisdom that was created. They say, then, that the Word is the “beginning.” He is not different from Wisdom in essence, but only in our way of conceiving him and in his relationship. The reality is one and the same, which the Scriptures now call “essential.” In one respect it is Wisdom, belonging closely to God. In another respect, if I may put it so, it is the creative Word, who has inclined toward the things he made. And the Son of God is not called Word only here. One can set beside this sayings not only from the New Testament but from the Old: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm.” Also: “He sent his word and healed them.” And Luke says: “Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and became servants of the word handed them down to us.”

FRAGMENT 2

^{2a} On John 1:4. “What came into being in him,” that is, in the Word, “was life.” The point is that, just as God brought all things into existence, so also those things that are made to live might be given life by sharing in him. So it is fitting that it says, “And the life was the light of men.” We should not listen to those who take this wording to mean that the Word is a created being. For what has come into being is not itself life; and this life did not come to him from outside, for the life came to be in him. Created beings could not have him as life in his essence in the way he is with the Father. For it is said to God: “With you is the fountain of life.” This life is with the Father, but it does not make the Father alive. The Father does not live by sharing in life. Rather, being God who is life, he begets life, just as one who is wise begets wisdom and one who is powerful begets power. This life, wishing to benefit rational beings, took on a relationship toward them, so that they might live by taking hold of it through sharing. And this should not be said only of their common living, but also of living according to virtue, in which they happen to live well.

^{2b} This is shown by the wording itself, for it says: “And the life was the light of men.” That this is how it is here can be confirmed from another point as well. The Son of God and Word, who is God as Word, is with God, as was just said. He also comes to be with human beings, as far as they are able to receive his presence. For it is said: “The word of the Lord came to Hosea,” and “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah,” and in general: “Those to

whom the word of God came he called gods.” So just as he is Word with God, yet comes to be with created beings, in the same way he is life with the Father, and gives life to those he visits. In him there arises a life-giving relationship, suited to those who are being given life. But since besides giving life he also produces knowledge of the truth, enlightening the mind of those who receive him, he is also called the light of men. And being the light of men, he clearly enlightens the rational beings above them as well. For if he is the light of the lesser rational beings, much more is he the light of those who stand higher.

FRAGMENT 3

On John 1:5. The light that is spoken of as divine dissolves every darkness, and all ignorance and wickedness that has any existence. So when it shines in such darkness, the darkness does not “overtake” it. This light is the wisdom and righteousness of God. As wisdom, it looses the mind from ignorance. As righteousness, it sets the steps of the soul straight. That is what it means for the light to shine in the darkness: it is not hindered from sending out its own rays to the person being enlightened. So it is not overtaken by the darkness, since the darkness is dissolved and made to vanish at its coming. For the darkness does not overtake the light while it stands and is active; it is dissolved and no longer exists. Take Paul. While he did not know Christ, he persecuted him, out of the ignorance that was in him, which we have called darkness. But when the light he was persecuting shone out with its own rays, the darkness was dissolved, and in this way he was able to lay hold of the light that had been persecuted by it. In the same way the robber who repented was blinded by the darkness I described and persecuted the light. But the darkness in the robber was dissolved, and so he did lay hold of the light. To put the point more plainly: truth is light. When falsehood and all deceit, that is, the darkness, pursues the light, then it is dissolved and vanishes as it draws near the one it is pursuing. For when truth appears, falsehood and deceit are dissolved. And I will say something paradoxical: the darkness pursues the light while it is far away, but when it comes close to overtake it, it vanishes. For falsehood, so long as it stands apart from truth, holds sway and works in a person, so as to drive truth out of the mind. But when it comes near the truth, it is shown not to exist at all. This is why God, though able to prevent it, necessarily allowed evil to exist: so that the greatness of virtue might be shown.

FRAGMENT 4

On John 1:6. [He says “a man”] not so much because of the common description of a human being as because he was made by nature in the image of God and with a likeness to God. It should be noted that “there was” (or “came to be”) does not always mean coming into existence. Here “there came to be” refers to “sent from God,” so that what is said is this: “There came to be [a man] sent from God for a witness.” If these things are rightly said about John, how much more are the things written or said about the Son of God to be taken as said or written of one who is spoken of, and written of, and who comes to be.

FRAGMENT 5

On John 1:7. “So that all might believe.” That is, as far as it depended on him, even if not all did believe. For if not everyone receives the illumination that comes from the sun, no one would say on that account that the sun does not rise for the purpose of enlightening everyone. The purpose of the one who sent him was that all should believe.

FRAGMENT 6

On John 1:8. “He was not the light.” That is, not the light that is spoken of as divine. Some had supposed, because of the advantages John possessed, that he himself was the Christ. For this reason the evangelist says this, to uproot such an error entirely. Even if John is a light, he is not that light about which the saints say to God, “In your light we shall see light.” So even if John was a light, in the sense of what was said to the disciples, “You are the light of the world,” he was not that true light. “True light” is not said in contrast to falsehood but to distinguish it from what is only an image. For “truth” and “true” are sometimes set against falsehood and deceit, and sometimes against an image and a copy. One may take the perceptible light, and especially the sun, as the image light, and the intelligible light as the true light. Or rather, the true light is what gives light to intelligible things, the holy powers. This, I think, is what the Scripture says: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” For the light spoken of as divine was “the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world.” But since the phrase “coming into the world” is ambiguous, and can refer sometimes to the light and sometimes to the man, it must be explained both ways. First, we should take it that the

light enlightens every man as it comes, at the time of its visit, since the man is in the world: as has been said, the light comes into the world to enlighten man. Second, the true light enlightens every man who comes into the world.

FRAGMENT 7

On John 1:12. Not everyone turned away from him, since many of them welcomed him, above all the apostles. So the evangelist adds: "But as many as received him, to them he gave authority to become children of God." Those who are being brought to faith, and perhaps also those who have already advanced, have the authority to become children of God. For the time being they have received only the authority. They will actually become children when they are made perfect in virtue, faith and knowledge. He shows why they had this authority by writing that it was given to those who believed in his name, that is, the name of the light. Believing in the name of the light is not the same as believing in the light. So authority is given to those who believed in his name. By "authority" I mean a fitness for becoming children. But if, through progress, they move from believing in his name to believing him, they would then be children of God no longer in potential but in actuality. Some give assent to the light with a simpler and not very [thorough] understanding, and they believe in his name. Others come to him with knowledgeable proof and well-ordered understanding, and they believe in him and call upon him. That is why Jesus, after the disciples had made much progress, says, "You believe in God, believe also in me." In other words: "You now have the time to pass from believing in my name, so that you may believe me and the Father." Indeed, when he had explained to them the greatest matters of theology, he added, as if speaking to all, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

FRAGMENT 8

On John 1:13. Those who are born of God were born of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ and by doing righteousness. They are not subject to birth from bloods; that is, their origin is not from material things. Indeed, when Peter believed that the Christ is the Son of the living God, the Savior said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Consider also, from another angle, whether a man can be a son of bloods while thinking himself devout and a son of God because he brings the perceptible [sacrifices] com-

manded by the law. These people suppose they please God through slaughter and the pouring out of blood. Doing this was blameless in the past, but it is no longer so for us, because the blood of Jesus, given for us, is fully sufficient for our justification. Those who do everything in order to appear righteous to men are subject to the will of the flesh and the birth from a man. These people set out to please God by the will of the flesh. They circumcise the flesh and want to live as Jews openly, while taking no care for the heart and the hidden Judaism. And those have the birth from the will of a man who, under the pretext of human philosophy, keep away from vice and take up virtue. Higher than all these, then, is the one who is born of God, because after believing in his name he has come to believe him.

FRAGMENT 9

The words “as of an only-begotten from a father” lead us to understand that the Son is from the Father’s own being. For none of the created things is “from the Father.” They have their being from God through the Word. If other things also had their existence from the Father, the word “only-begotten” would have been put there for nothing, since there would be many who have their being from the Father. But this only-begotten from the Father is said to be full of grace and truth. He is not something other than the things he is said to be full of. For the only-begotten himself says of himself, “I am the truth.” What is filled by truth is receptive of truth. But truth, which in actual fact is what it is said to be, is not receptive of truth. The same could be said about grace. It is not strange to say such things of the only-begotten, since the same kind of thing is written of the Father. In the prophet he says of himself, “I am full.” It is likely that this expression was also used because of what could be observed before the Savior’s coming. The law given through Moses punished those who sinned, and showed favor to no one for what was done in breach of it. Moreover, this law handed down the rites of the mysteries through images and shadow-sketches. It led by the hand those who were guided by them and prepared them for the teaching of Christ. This is why the law is called a tutor leading to Christ. Now the Savior has come, not to punish those who have sinned but to give forgiveness for what was done in that way. He has come to put the finishing touch on the teaching, and to bring knowledge of the images of the truth, by revealing the truth himself, or rather by being himself the truth. So it is fitting that he appeared full of grace and truth to those who saw him. For if he showed favor

to some and not to others, he would not be full of grace. In the same way, if he brought one part of the shadow to an end but not another, he would not be full of truth. But in fact he put an end to every shadow and image, and he grants forgiveness of all sins to those who flee to him through repentance. So he is full of truth and grace.

FRAGMENT 10

10a [The text reads “Kekropes,” probably “he has cried out.”] This is said not about the sound of the voice but about the intensity of the thought. For the man who announces great teachings utters them, as he should, with a great voice that matches his thought. The word “first” must be understood as [text missing]. Still, what John says amounts to this: Jesus, who was before me and prior to me, came after me and behind me. He did not come to stay behind me but to be ahead of me. We must understand that he comes “after” John in terms of the time of birth. John was conceived six months before Jesus was conceived. In this way Jesus came after him and yet came to be ahead of him, shown to be God and John’s Maker. It could be put this way too: everyone who learns from a teacher is thought of as walking behind him, and in that sense is said to go after him. Since the Savior also came to John, who was baptizing, in order to be baptized, he is said to come after the baptizer in the sense that he was baptized by John. But in the sense that he had been made holy and had been testified to by the Father, he came to be ahead of the baptizer, shown to be more honorable and superior to him. It is also well said, “He has come to be ahead of me,” since his existence is prior to his having come to be [ahead]. And note how precisely this is said. It is not written, “He who is behind me was able to be before him.” But it is not impossible for the one who is first to come afterward. It could also be said another way. “Because,” he says, “from his fullness we all received, and grace in place of grace.” Here again John gives the reason why Jesus, who is first, has come to be ahead of him, and he adds, “Because from his fullness we all received, and grace in place of grace.”

10b For how is he not “before” in the sense of surpassing, and the first of those who are filled, since he is the one who fills? If he himself brings to completion, and fills with virtue and wisdom, those who come to holiness, how is he not first and far above them? Pay attention to the precision of what is written. It does not say “the fullness,” but “From his fullness we all received.” Those who share in holiness in this life, and in the knowledge of the

truth, who know in part and prophesy in part, have these things from his fullness, but they do not have his fullness. They might have it in the life of the ages to come, according to the apostle: "When the perfect comes, the part will be done away." The words in John's catholic letter agree with this: "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that if it is revealed, we shall be like [him], because we shall see him as he is." That is, as far as it is possible for created beings to know God. For it is not possible to take "as he is" to mean as God is in himself. Still, we will have something more than our present condition, if we no longer know in part, but, stripped of ignorance, come face to face with the purest truth and see him as far as we are able. So because John has received from the fullness of Jesus, he says about himself, "He has come to be before me," since what he had, he had from that fullness. And the fact that not one person but all the saints receive from the fullness of Jesus shows the superiority of the one who fills and perfects. For if all the saints were filled not from the whole fullness but from some part of it, those who receive from the fullness of the one who gave to them would be seen to fall far short.

FRAGMENT 11

Some of our virtues we have from ourselves, from our own resources, and we acquire them by choice. Others come from God. We have believed the Savior and his Father as far as was open to us, from what lay in our own power. What is left for us is to ask also for what comes from God, as the disciples of Jesus say to him, "Add faith to us." The word "Add" means that they are asking for a faith given by God, in addition to the faith they had by choice. Paul too says as much when he writes, "According to the proportion of faith," meaning that the gifts of the Spirit are given in proportion to the faith that is already in us from what lies in our power. And again: "To another faith is given, he says, by the same Spirit." But if faith is given to someone in proportion to the faith he has, it is clear that faith sent by God comes to the faith that we have rightly achieved ourselves. What has been said about faith must be said also about the other virtues. Virtue is a grace, making the one who has it gracious. So when we have achieved it by our own choice, then what is from God arrives. And this is what it means that grace is given by God "in place of grace."

FRAGMENT 12

The law was given through Moses, but not by him; it was given by God. For the law belongs to God, as it is written: "The law of the Lord is blameless, turning souls back." But even if the law was given through Moses, "grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ." Grace, through the forgiveness of sins, prevents the punishment that the law imposes on sinners. Truth goes beyond the shadows and the types. Consider also what follows. The law and the prophets continued until John, so that he became the end of the old Scripture, after which the coming of the Savior took place. So the statement "The one who comes after me has come to be before me" fits very well. Since the Savior's coming was announced beforehand by the law and the prophets, he is said to have come "after." But even if he came after, he came to be before them, because he fulfilled law and prophets by making plain what was divine in them. He was shown to be the cause of all that God-breathed Scripture, which extended as far as John the Baptist.

FRAGMENT 13

^{13a} On John 1:18. Seeing is of two kinds: by the senses and by the mind. The one grasps bodies, the other grasps things without bodies. So we call the things that lie before the mind, and are seen by it, "invisible." We do not mean that they are not seen, but that they are not made by nature to be seen. No body is invisible, even if at times it lies outside our sight and is not seen. For "invisible" does not mean "not seen." It means "not made by nature to be seen." That is why "not seen" and "invisible" cannot be exchanged for each other. What is invisible is, of course, not seen. But many bodies, though visible, are not seen, either because they are covered or because they are not [where the viewer happens to be]. With this distinction rightly made, we must take the statement as being about something invisible. Not even the highest powers see God. This is not from any weakness of their own, but because God has no body. Nor is God simply visible to the mind, but only to a mind set free from all ignorance, all evil and all matter.

^{13b} "Blessed," he says, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." By "heart" he means the mind. Whoever has become pure in the way described, and has been made perfect in virtue, reaches out to God as far as that can be done. This being so, the mind that is still subject to coming-to-be, and therefore to time, does not see God [text unclear]. That is why John did not

say outright, “No one has seen God,” but added the word “ever.” That word points to something about time, so that the meaning is this: for as long as the word “ever” can be said, as pointing to a state we are under, the mind is [caught up] in a life bound to matter. So it cannot see God by reaching out in thought. We, for our part, think of God as far as we can, from the ideas spoken about him in theology and from what we dimly have. But God himself does not understand himself through anything of that kind. He has understanding of himself through his own closeness to himself, being himself both the understanding and the one understood. Therefore only the Son knows him, since he is understood by the Father and understands the Father.

FRAGMENT 14

On John 1:18. It fits that the word “bosom” is used of the Father, since the Son is only-begotten God and his Son. Everything about the Godhead cannot be named, and it is made known to us, who are human, through human words. So the evangelist reasonably wrote, using what we know to show the Son’s closeness to the Father: “the one who is in the bosom of the Father.” Scripture says that all who are saved and receive God’s promises will be “in the bosoms of Abraham.” That means only that Abraham is called the father of the faithful. In the same way the Son of God is said to be in the bosoms of the one who begot him. And as faithful people come to be in the bosoms of faithful Abraham, so too the Son is in the bosoms of the Father. We must understand “the Father’s bosom” as we understand the other things said about God in human terms. Scripture sometimes says that prophets, patriarchs or angels saw God. Divine Scripture does not contradict itself here. For no one sees God by reaching out with his own mind, as we are said to see visible things by directing our eyes at them. God is seen by those to whom he decides to reveal himself. If someone really saw God, he would be seeing him, so to speak, as he is and how great he is. But since it is not the person who sees, but God who shows himself, God gives himself to be understood by created beings as far as is possible for them. So the Savior also says, “And I will make myself visible to him.” He did not say, “That person will see me,” but “I will make myself visible to him.” And this is * * *

FRAGMENT 17

The forerunner stands for the Savior in several different ways. He is a prophet of God. He is a lamp of the light, giving light beforehand to those who are

in the night of ignorance and training the eye of the soul so that it can run to the great light as well. [[He is like the morning star, the herald of the sun, marking the arrival of the day that is about to dawn on us.]] He is also the voice of the Word, for a voice must come before a word. This is why he says, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." By "one crying" he means the Word, and by "wilderness" the soul that has no knowledge of the divine teaching. How could it not be a wilderness, when it is deprived of the word of God and of the voice that makes him known? The work of a voice is to make clear what is signified, so that people may grasp the word that is being declared without confusion. And what does the voice of the one crying command the wilderness? "Make straight," he says, "the way of the Lord." The wilderness stands for all who are ignorant of the one who comes after the voice. A man who goes ahead of a king orders those to whom the king is coming to make straight the road for those who are coming to the teaching of the word. [[So John does for the Word. For as a voice runs ahead of a word, so John, as a voice, runs ahead of Christ, who is the Word.]]

FRAGMENT 18

^{18a} What does John mean when he says, "In your midst stands one whom you do not know," when Jesus was not yet there? For in the following verses it says, "The next day he sees Jesus coming to him," which plainly shows that Jesus was not there when John said, "In your midst stands," bearing witness to the light. For John knew that he was also God the Word, and the Word is present to every rational being. Some suppose that the thinking faculty, which some call the ruling faculty, is in the very middle of us. The Word, by which we are rational, is there. It is the same as the image of God, according to which man was made in the image of God. John shows that the Word of God is the one who is about to come to be baptized by him, and so he says, "In your midst stands" one who is unknown to you. He is unknown to you because, although you ought to have him in your midst doing what is fitting, you keep him idle, and, if I may put it this way, inactive within you, since you do nothing and think nothing rationally. Having said this about the being of the Word, John goes on to join to it what concerns his coming among us. He says, "The one who comes after me", that is, after the law and the prophets; for I am a sign and the end of them.

^{18b} He comes after me, fulfilling everything that was prophesied about him. For the one who is prophesied comes afterward, after what was spoken

beforehand. “In your midst stands”, as we have already explained, “one whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.” You should understand “the strap of the sandal” like this. The Word of God does not carry out what he arranges for human beings with his divinity uncovered. He takes the form of a servant, so that his journey, as it works out in the plan of salvation, is veiled. This is also said of him in the Psalms: “And he bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet.” [[There is something dark about his journey, because it is unclear.]] So the strap of his sandal, that is, of the darkness around his feet, is the account of how hard it is to grasp. It binds and holds the sandal tight around his feet. Untying the strap would therefore mean making clear, and setting out in words, how God took a body, covering and hiding the power by which he travels for the plan of salvation. Since no human being can demonstrate the manner of this union, it is fitting that the man who is more than a prophet, than whom none born of women is greater, confesses that he is not fit to untie the strap of his sandal.

FRAGMENT 19

It is also well said, “the one who takes away the sin,” and not “the one who took away” or “who will take away.” For the taking away of the sin of those who flee to him is always at work. From this we establish that he took away, takes away, and will take away, the act of taking away being applied to each time in turn.

FRAGMENT 20

20a “And I did not know him.” He says: I who teach did not say these things about Christ by nature, or from the common understanding of men. I did not know him. I spoke because the Holy Spirit and the Father had revealed to me the testimonies about him. I was sent to bear witness about the light, and I received the beginning of knowledge of the one I testify to when I was sent. But we must also try to explain in another way what “not knowing” means. Even when he says of the Savior, “And I did not know him,” he is not contradicting what he testified. His words show that he was formerly ignorant, but now knows this very person, because God revealed him to him. This is shown by what is said immediately afterward. For John himself again says that he saw the Spirit come down on the Lord in the form of a dove. “I did not know him,” he says, “but the one who sent me to baptize with water said

to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit coming down, this is my Son.' And I have seen and have testified." Now even before the Spirit came down, John knew him as lamb, as man, as prophet, as Christ, and as the true light. Yet he still lacked the knowledge that he is the Son of God and the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. He gained that knowledge when the sign he was given was seen. Since this is so, we must ask how John says he "saw" the Spirit. It is not right to think that the Spirit, which has an intelligible existence, is seen by the senses. So we will examine together with the passage before us, treating the question in general terms, what is said in a similar way in the prophecies. For many of the prophets, and in short many of the holy men, are recorded as having beheld visions and sights.

20b For seeing and sight, as in other places, are divided in two ways: into perception by the senses and perception by the mind. It is impossible for the holy men to have seen God with the senses, or the Trinity altogether, or the things under it that have an intelligible existence. What remains is that they beheld the visions with the mind. They did not see them as they are in their own substance, but as they are able to see them by means of some analogy. Certainly the Holy Spirit has no shape or form or appearance of any kind, yet the mind receives the idea of a dove. And although the Holy Spirit does not move from place to place, John sees a descent taking place from heaven on Jesus as he is baptized. What follows shows that the grasp of none of these things is by the senses: "The one on whom you see it," he says, "coming down and remaining on him." The coming down of something can indeed be seen with the senses when it happens to be a body. [The text is corrupt here:] But what has come down on the one on whom it came down is seen not only by the eyes but also by the mind. The senses, however, are not able to grasp things that remain, so as to confirm this vision. And we must also say, by another proof, that the other evangelists report that John saw the descent of the Spirit on the Son, and that he saw the heavens opened or torn apart. But the opening or tearing of the heavens cannot be seen with the senses. It cannot be seen even in the denser bodies, I mean water and air, and let us include the upper air, if that is something other than the heavens. For when things pass through continuous bodies that are not hard, they pass through them without the opening and the passage coming from anywhere else. The things passing through are themselves what open them, and after those that crossed have passed, the bodies join together again.

20c One cannot see water divided unless a more solid body has been put into it. If that is so, the opening of the heavens would not come under sight, since the Holy Spirit who came down from there is not a body. So the Baptist saw these things with the mind. We should also notice that the Holy Spirit remained on Jesus alone. If the Spirit had come down and stayed on someone else too, there would be no sign pointing out the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. This must be shown as follows. The Holy Spirit makes his home in undefiled and pure souls, and does not stay where there is sin. For “the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit and will depart from foolish thoughts.” David, who had fallen into a sin, makes his plea to God: “Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.” Jesus alone committed no sin and had no deceit in his mouth (it is said of him alone: “him who did not know sin”). So it is fitting that the Holy Spirit, having come down on him, remained. All this, the Spirit’s coming down from heaven on Jesus and remaining on him, was written for the sake of the saving plan. It is not a historical report but a vision seen by the mind, as I have already said. For the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Son. Neither the Son nor the Father is in a place, so that the Holy Spirit would have to travel from the Father to the Son by moving across. In general, what is said about the Godhead should be taken in a way the mind can grasp, even when it is put in human terms, such as standing, sitting and going up, and whatever similar things are written about the Godhead.

FRAGMENT 21

It is worth asking how Andrew here, on the second day after Jesus’ baptism, immediately finds his own brother Peter, while elsewhere, according to Matthew, Jesus finds Peter and his brother Andrew many days after the baptism. It is likely that Andrew first brought Peter to Jesus, and Peter was helped a little by the teacher. Then, after his brother had been helped, Andrew withdrew to attend to his own affairs. After this first calling, Jesus called them to follow him continually, giving them authority to fish for people through the teaching he gave them. “Come and see,” he says. Perhaps by “Come” he urges them to the life of action. By “See” he indicates that the contemplation that follows the successful carrying out of those actions will surely come to those who want it, as they persevere in them.

FRAGMENT 22

He said that he would be called Peter, a name taken from the rock, who is Christ. The point is that just as a wise person comes from wisdom and a holy person from holiness, so Peter comes from the rock * *. This is proved from what the Saviour said to the man so named: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."

FRAGMENT 23

The words "The next day he wanted to go out into Galilee" are ambiguous, and show that the one who went out may be Andrew, or may be Jesus. But the statement seems rather to be about Andrew, who went out into Galilee and found Philip. To this Philip, found by Andrew, Jesus says: "Follow me." To follow Jesus is to follow the Word, wisdom and righteousness, acting and thinking rightly. In the Greek language Bethsaida is translated "House of hunters." To such people Jesus said: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." About hunters of this kind, as sent by God, there is a prophecy in Jeremiah, spoken in the person of God, which runs like this: "And look, I am sending to you many hunters, who will hunt you down."

FRAGMENT 24

He does not mean that the prophets wrote that Jesus would be the son of Joseph, from Nazareth. He means: we have found that this man is the one about whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, spoke.

FRAGMENT 25

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He is either doubting ("Can so great a good really come out of Nazareth?") or speaking with confidence: the one who has been found is indeed from Nazareth, and is truly good. Philip answers him, "Come and see" Jesus, the one who has been found. He wants him to be convinced by sight rather than by hearing about the one found.

FRAGMENT 26

On John 1:49. Nathanael's words to Jesus he put this way: "You are the Son of God; you are king of Israel, the [discerning] race." To look into the heart and know who has deceit in himself and who has none belongs to a son of God. It does not belong to one of the many sons, but to the only-begotten, who is king of the chosen race. This is Jesus, and that is why he was Son of God.

FRAGMENT 27

On John 1:50. "You saw me then, when I happened to be under the fig tree, before I was called by Philip." Jesus heard this and said: "Because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." Now that the plain sense of the text has been made clear, we must speak of the allegory. Philip, by following Jesus, who is God's Word and God's wisdom, became a hunter of the souls that God gives to those who are able to benefit them. For "Nathanael" is interpreted "gift of the Lord." To this disciple, who had been given to him, Philip did not at once communicate the things about the divinity of the Son of God. He spoke instead of his coming as a man: "We have found him whom we Hebrews all read about in common, as one who was to come, in the writings of Moses and the prophets." He meant Jesus, born of the virgin without the sowing of a man's seed. This Jesus is called the son of Joseph, who had been betrothed to Mary, and he has his origin from Nazareth in terms of place, for Nazareth was the virgin's city. The disciple Nathanael received this from Philip, who had by now become his teacher. He said to the one who had taught him: "If what has been found is from Nazareth, is it good?" Philip immediately called him to the very sight of the matter: "Come and see." He did not want the disciple always to be a hearer of voices. He wanted him to be a beholder of the truth, hurrying from the hearing of words to seeing. Jesus saw Nathanael coming, not only by walking but also by progress toward the vision. He bears witness about him, who was so eager for the understanding of the truth [the text here is uncertain], and says to those with him: "Do you see this man coming?" He is an Israelite not only in the senses and according to the flesh, but also according to the spirit and the understanding. For he has a mind that beholds God. He is truly an Israelite, and not falsely so called, since he is free from all deceit and is a friend of the truth.

FRAGMENT 28

On John 2:1. The third day had now come since Jesus was baptized. A wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus himself was invited together with his disciples. For Jesus is the maker of the man and the woman, and he does not refuse to be invited to a wedding. He is the very one who, after forming Eve, brought her to Adam. That is why he says in the gospel about this union: "What God has joined together,

let no man separate.” So let the heretics who reject marriage be ashamed, when Jesus is invited to a wedding and his mother is there. The Manichaeans must also be refuted, who say that Mary is not the mother of Jesus, when the evangelist bears witness that Jesus had a mother.

FRAGMENT 29

We can see the evangelist’s precision in this very story. He knew that the willfully wicked and crafty among the Jews were ready to slander the mighty works of Jesus. So he presents Jesus giving the order about drawing the water, not to his own disciples, but to the servants of the banquet. Otherwise the slanderers would have said that if the disciples of Jesus had drawn the water, they had filled the jars with wine and only pretended to have filled them with water. In the same sequence comes the phrase “they filled the jars up to the brim.” This was so that no pretext for sophistry would be left. If the jars had not been filled with water, and wine had been poured in, it might have seemed that the whole content had not come from water.

FRAGMENT 30

The word “believed” is used in place of “were confirmed.” For the most part he uses “faith” to mean confirmation. So to these people he revealed his glory all the more. For changing a substance belongs to a creator, not to a created thing. To become wine from water is not a simple change of quality but a change of substance.

FRAGMENT 31

“And after this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brothers and his disciples.” Many people ask how Jesus had brothers, since Mary remained a virgin until her death. By nature he had no brothers, since the virgin bore no other child, and he himself was not born of Joseph. So they were called his brothers by law, being sons of Joseph by a wife who had died earlier. And this was because Mary was, by common agreement, called his wife. For the law of Moses teaches this, imposing the penalty for adultery on a man who has relations with a betrothed virgin. The text goes on: “because he humbled his neighbor’s wife, he shall die.” So if the law calls the virgin who was betrothed to Joseph “Joseph’s wife,” then, in keeping with such an arrangement, those born of Joseph are called brothers of Jesus, even though Jesus himself was not born of him.

FRAGMENT 32

^{32a} Three public feasts were handed down to the Hebrews by the great hierophant Moses. One of them was the one called Passover. It stood above the other two, since it showed forth the deliverance from Egypt and the crossing over to the holy land. So at this festival the whole nation of the Jews hurried to Jerusalem from every city and village, for the law had handed down that the Passover be sacrificed in this city alone. The three feasts were called by the name of God, who gave them as law. But the Jews no longer kept the feasts according to the ordinance, but according to their own appetites and pleasures. So the evangelist calls it not the Passover of God but “of the Jews.” For they no longer came to Jerusalem for the sake of worship but for the sake of luxury. Everything was brought into the city from all the surrounding places for feasting, and it was sold in the house of God. For the evangelist said that oxen, sheep and doves were sold there as in a marketplace. But it happened that those coming to the feast did not bring enough silver with them. So some money-changers thought of setting up tables there and exchanging small coins, that is, lending, taking gold from those who needed silver. These people had come to get drunk and live luxuriously rather than to keep a feast.

^{32b} So the whole nation of the Jews was there, giving itself over to drunkenness. Jesus entered the house of God and drove everyone out of it, with only a whip made of cords. This would not have succeeded if he had been an ordinary man [† who undertook to do this]. He threw out not only the rest of the crowd but even the very men who were selling goods for the feasting. Let no one think this is less than his other wonders. It was not possible, without divine working, for one man to drive out so great a crowd, especially when they were savage and murderous toward him. In fact the Jews themselves, astonished at what he had dared, say to him later on, “What sign do you show us, that you do these things?” They mean: “By what power are you so great, and what kind of godly service can you perform, that you do such things, daring to drive out a whole populous nation by yourself?”

FRAGMENT 33

“But they believed, not in him, but in his name.” These people do not have a firm or complete knowledge, as was also said earlier about them, but a knowledge that can very easily fall away. So he did not entrust himself to

them, because he knew all things, not from the surface but from the depth of the mind. For knowing people from their actions and words is possible even for a mere man. But Jesus is not a mere man. He is God who became man, and he knows everything, grasping what is hidden in the mind. For it is said of God alone: "He who knows hidden things and knows all things before they come to be." And since Jesus is God, and knows what is hidden in the heart, he has no need to receive testimony from a man, because he knows what is in the man. For it is not said simply that he knows the man, but what is in the man. And since he knew that they would not remain in the faith they had in his name, he did not entrust himself to them. For they had believed because of signs, not from an understanding about God. That is why they could quickly fall away, being deceived by themselves or by others who reasoned that perhaps the signs had not truly or rightly happened. But the one who believes in him, having his understanding from God, is not easily deceived.

FRAGMENT 34

Nicodemus must be counted among the many who had believed in the name of Jesus. He was one of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews. He plainly thought that Jesus was a teacher who had God with him, but he did not think that Jesus was God. His own words show this, when he said, "You have come from God as a teacher." And as if adding proof for his judgment about Jesus as teacher, he goes on: "For no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." So the evangelist fittingly recorded that his approach took place at night. He came at a time when he was likely to escape the notice of the many Pharisees, of whom he was one. Or rather, and this is beyond dispute, he came at night because he was in ignorance about the God to whom he was coming and had not yet been enlightened. The sun of righteousness, who makes the intelligible day, had not yet risen for him. Abraham was seized with love for that day, prepared himself to see it, and rejoiced when he saw it. Pharisees are men who follow the leading rank and sect in Judaism. They profess a strenuous way of life and exactness in the law and the prophets. For this reason they are, for the most part, bold and proud. This is also how they got their name. For "Pharez" among the Hebrews [means "divided"]. Since these men separate themselves from every nation of the Jews, as though they surpassed them in wisdom and way of life, they want to be called by the name from "Pharez."

FRAGMENT 35

^{35a} The word “from above” is sometimes [understood from places and ...], as in “The one who comes from above is above all.” At other times it means [from the beginning], as in “To which you want to be slaves again from above,” that is, [again from the beginning]. The birth from above, which the Savior teaches about, comes about from taking up virtue and keeping his commandments. For he says to the disciples: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens.” Even if Nicodemus responded wrongly to what was said, what he said still holds something true, even though he did not mean it that way. For truly, no one who stays in being human, in the sense of growing old in the human condition, can receive the birth that is of the Spirit and from above. Just as no unjust and unbelieving person, while remaining so, can be born according to righteousness and faith, so no one who stays in human ways and grows old in them can receive the birth that makes new.

^{35b} So the teacher of truth writes to those who are eager to come to the divine birth that they must strip off the old man with his deeds. Once he is cast off, they put on the new man, “created according to God in righteousness.” Because such a person has been born from above, it follows that he will walk in newness of life. Urging his disciples toward this birth, Jesus said, “Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Pay close attention to this as well. Children do not avenge themselves on those who wrong them. They do not grieve when pleasant things are taken away. They do not feel any firm attachment to the things that are agreeable to them. So he wants us to be, by our disposition, what children are by their age. For they are like this without reason, but those who become like them at Jesus’ command do so by reason and by the best settled character, and they strive to be found in that state. So even if Nicodemus spoke these words in ignorance, there was still something true lying in his words that he did not understand.

FRAGMENT 36

^{36a} The Savior explains the manner in which one can “be born from above.” Since the aim is to enter the kingdom of God, and it is impossible to attain this without being born of water and spirit, being born from above goes together with being born of water and spirit. A person is born of the Spirit

when he is made according to the Spirit, becoming holy and spiritual by him. Then, since the one who enters the kingdom of God is born not of the Spirit alone but also of water, it follows that we should look in the Scripture for something about the water too. And consider whether the water differs from the Spirit only in concept and not in substance. For the Savior says elsewhere, “The one who believes in me, as the Scripture said, rivers of living water will flow from his belly. But he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive.” If it is said of the Spirit that he is living water, flowing like rivers out of the believer, then the water will differ from the Spirit only in concept. So just as someone is born of the Savior as wise from wisdom, so also he is born of the Spirit as holy and spiritual. And one who is cleansed by the water and watered so as to bear fruit is born of water and spirit. Someone else will say that “water” here means the teaching that cleanses the soul, which also contributes to being born from above. Concerning this cleansing, which comes about through divine discipline, the psalmist said to God, “You will wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” [[And to the multitude of Israel he says, “Wash your heart from wickedness, Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long will thoughts of your troubles remain in you?” By “thoughts of her troubles” he means the things done out of wickedness, for which she is going to be punished unless she washes herself by the instruction of the Scriptures.]] Then, since not the soul alone is called to salvation but also the body itself, the instrument the soul uses for its own activities, it is fitting that this too be sanctified through what the divine teaching calls the “washing of regeneration.” This is also named divine baptism, which is no longer simply water, for it is sanctified by a certain mystical invocation.

^{36b} And notice how great and powerful is the rite that the Savior handed down to his disciples. For he says, “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep” and so on. A person must first be made a disciple by receiving the teachings of the truth. Then he must keep what Jesus commanded them about the moral virtues. Only then is he baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So how can the water that is received along with these things still be mere water? It shares, as far as it can, in the power of the holy Trinity, and it is joined to moral and intellectual virtue. Consider also how great it is, by asking why it is received. If it is re-

ceived in order to enter the kingdom of God, and that kingdom surpasses everything, how can the cause of entering it not be great? By the kingdom of God we should mean the settled state of those who live in orderly obedience to his laws. This kingdom will also have its dwelling in its own place, I mean in the heavens. But here it is called the kingdom of God, while in Matthew it is called the kingdom of the heavens. We must say that Matthew named it from those who are ruled, or from the places where they are, while John and Luke named it from God who rules. It is the same when we ourselves speak of the kingdom of the Romans: we point to it through those who are ruled, showing it either by its place [the text is corrupt here], or by announcing it as the whole inhabited world.

FRAGMENT 37

^{37a} These words show the following meaning. The Holy Spirit comes only to the earnest, and stays far from the wicked. But “far” and “near” should not be understood in terms of place. They should be understood as one can understand them of things without bodies. For such expressions, often written even about God, do not mean distances in space. Since the Spirit, withdrawing from the wicked, fills those who have faith and virtue, it is rightly said, “The Spirit blows where he wills.” This also shows that the Spirit is a substance. He is not, as some suppose, an activity of God that has no distinct existence of its own. The apostle, too, after listing the gifts of the Spirit, immediately added, “All these things are worked by one and the same Spirit, who divides to each one individually as he wills.” But if he wills, and works, and divides, then he is an active substance, not an activity. Moreover, the saying in Acts, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,” is not far from willing and wishing. Besides this, words of the Spirit are recorded in the divine Scriptures, especially in the Acts of the Apostles: “While they were fasting and serving the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.’”

^{37b} And again in the same book a prophet named Agabus says, “The Holy Spirit says this: The man whose belt this is, the Jews will bind in this way,” and so on. Even so, though the Spirit blows where he wills, Nicodemus does not have him in himself, because he has not believed Jesus as he should. He hears only his voice, and does not know where he goes or where he comes from. A person hears only the Spirit’s voice when he reads the writings of the Spirit without understanding them. But everyone who pays attention to the

reading and searches the Scriptures, by understanding them, knows where the Spirit comes from and where the Spirit's way ends, the way he travels through the instruction of the divine oracles. For whoever knows the reason for which the Spirit's teaching has been given to people knows where he comes from. And whoever has seen for what purpose and to what end it has been given knows where he is going and comes to rest.

FRAGMENT 38

It is worth asking how the Savior could say that he had spoken of earthly things, when he had been teaching about the kingdom of God, about birth from above, about the Spirit [[and about being born of him]]. None of these things is earthly; each one is heavenly. One could answer that Jesus did not say, "If I spoke of things of the earth," but "the earthly things." By "earthly" he means things that can exist and be understood among people who are still living on earth. For these things are not earthly or heavenly by their own nature; though heavenly, they have been given to people by God's gift. [[That what is given to people on earth is from above and heavenly, James writes: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." He said this because he had learned it from the Savior, who said: "The Father will give good things from heaven to those who ask him."]] Next, some of the things God supplies can be brought to those who know in part, while others are for those who have reached perfection in the age to come, when what is partial will be done away once the perfect has come. So it was said, very fittingly: "How, if I tell you the heavenly things, will you believe?" For the one who does not believe in part will not believe the perfect things either.

FRAGMENT 39

The matter of the serpent was commanded by God so that those led by Moses might know this: just as they were being destroyed by the venomous beasts because they had not believed God, who had promised them the land, so they would be saved by gazing at the raised-up serpent, because of God who commanded it to be done. It was not the nature of the thing made, but the one who ordered it to be made, who provided the cause of their salvation. And the spiritual serpents likewise subjected people to death through sins, injecting into them the venom of their own wickedness. Now when death had become widespread against souls (this is the death that follows sin), God

was moved by entreaty and was pleased to have his own Son lifted up, so that all who look to him by faith may be freed from the harm of the spiritual serpents and have eternal life. Eternal life is not the common life that other living creatures also have, but the life that comes about through faith and the rest of virtue.

FRAGMENT 40

From the present saying one can also refute those who say that the title “Son” applies only to the one born of Mary, and not to God the Word. [[For see: the Son of God is the one in whom people are to believe, the one who was sent. But what was sent into the world was not what was taken from the virgin (for that came into being there, born of her), but God the Word, who is truly the true light. For concerning the same one, those who say, “Send out your light and your truth,” are making a petition to God; and again it is written, “God sent out his Word and healed them.”]]

FRAGMENT 41

Someone will say that what has been explained is not very sensibly understood, as though Jesus had not come to judge the world now. He will point to what follows next: “And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world.” And in this same Gospel Jesus says, “I have come into the world for judgment.” So the difficulty raised must be resolved. Even if Jesus does both things by coming, judging the world and saving it, one is for the sake of the other. He came into the world for judgment in order to save it (for he does not save in order to judge). It is like a physician who comes to a sick person in order to heal him. This is the purpose of the physician’s coming, even if other things happen, such as cutting or burning. For the first aim is not to cut [[text defective]] but to heal. Next after this comes: “The one who believes in him is not judged.” For the one who through faith has reached complete salvation is not subject to judgment. But the one who has not believed, being self-condemned, has already been judged.

FRAGMENT 42

^{42a} On John 3:19. “This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light.” If the light had not come into the world, those who had not done good could have pleaded ignorance of what is good. Those who practice wickedness would likewise have had grounds for a defense, claiming they had not known these things were

evil. But the light has come into the world, and every misguided excuse is driven away. So there will be a judgment that examines the actions and the mind of each person. It will then be shown that those who loved the light obtain the kingdom of God. Through their love for the light they have themselves become light, by good works and a true mind, so that they hated the darkness (that is, wickedness and ungodliness). Those who turned away from virtue, and from God who supplies it, will be tested by eternal punishments. They were eager to have evil works, so they hated the light, because by making things plain it exposed their worthless works. "For everyone who practices worthless things [hates] the light." He does not want to come near it at all, so that his works will not be exposed as evil. He wants to hide them so that he will not be condemned before others. But even if this man hates the light, the worker of the truth still comes to the light. He wants the works he does to be made plain, because they are being accomplished in God. It was well said: "the one who practices worthless things" and "the one who does the truth." [The next clause is corrupt in the Greek. Its sense seems to be that] it is neither the case that one who [practices evil] withdraws from wickedness [and] looks toward the good, nor that one who professes to rejoice in the truth ever inclines toward the worse.

^{42b} This is why he said "practices" and "does." For it is not possible for someone disposed toward wickedness to rejoice in the good. And the lover of truth is altogether a desirer of good things. Coming or not coming to the light must be understood not as a matter of place but of action. Everyone who acts according to virtue is coming to it. The worthless person, who works wickedness, refuses to be with the light. For good and evil, light and darkness, cannot exist together. (In these passages light and the good mean the same thing, and darkness and evil mean the same thing.) But those from the heresies think that some people are in darkness by nature and love it. Notice what has been said: each of them is in darkness by choice and loves it. "People loved," he says, "the darkness rather than the light," for their works were evil. They do not have evil works because of the darkness. Rather, because they have evil works, they love the darkness. And again, they do not do worthless things because they fail to come to the light. Rather, because they do worthless things, they do not come to the light. It is up to us either to do worthless things or [to come to] the light and do the truth.

FRAGMENT 43

On John 3:19. Since it is written, "People loved the darkness rather than the light," we should ask whether they loved both, but loved the darkness more and the light less. That would seem to fit people who are neither very worthless nor perfect in virtue. But I think this is not what is meant, that they loved both and loved the darkness more, or the light more. The thought is rather this: human beings are self-determining, because they have free choice. They ought to have welcomed the light and fled the darkness. Those who have evil works did the reverse, so that they loved the darkness and in no way the light. "More than" should not be heard as a comparison, as if they loved the darkness more than the light. They did not love the light at all, for they hated it. That this understanding is right is shown by the passage itself. He says they loved the darkness rather than the light because, practicing worthless things, they hate the light. If they hate it, they do not love the darkness by comparison. Take in the same way what the apostle writes about wicked people, that they are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." In that phrase too it is made clear that they love only pleasure and do not love God at all. They are called lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God in that sense. And in the Psalms it is written about a certain worthless person: "You loved evil more than goodness." He did not love both and love evil more.

FRAGMENT 44

We must listen with a generous mind to the words "All are coming to him," taken in the sense of ["many"]. We must do the same with "A man can receive nothing of himself unless it has been given him from heaven." That means: a man cannot have any divine gift unless it has been given him from heaven. God's gifts are given to those who have prepared themselves to receive them by faith and virtue. So learn this. Even if I have received from the Son of God the power to baptize with water for repentance, I fall far short of the one who gave it to me. I do not say this only now. I say it because I said it before, and I have you as witnesses of what I told those who asked whether I was the Christ. You were present [when I said] that I am the forerunner of the Christ and not the Christ himself. Let no one stumble as if the words "A man can receive nothing" had been wrongly said.

FRAGMENT 45

^{45a} The rational being, of which the human soul is a part, cannot of itself bring forth any good thing, though it is able to receive good things. So, like a woman, it is made by nature to bear from another the virtues it is able to give birth to, both those of action and those of understanding. That is why I call it a bride, and the bride not of just anyone but only of the one who sows good things. That one is none other than Jesus. You say he baptizes. I have testified to him, and you say all are going to him. If you too want to bear good things, go away to him. You are part of the bride, since you belong to the rational beings. Even if he is the bridegroom, I am his friend and a servant of his purpose, and my aim is to present to him those whom I teach. Though you have become my disciples, I am not the bridegroom. That is, I am not the perfect teacher. So I urge you, who are still [pale], to be joined to the perfect teacher and to go to him. I myself pray to be his hearer, for I rejoice to hear his voice. So it is our joy when those who first came to me gain such a state of understanding that they can take in the wisdom he teaches the worthy. For you know that he comes from above, that he is over all, and that he is king and almighty. If he is over all, he is clearly over me as well. So it is right that he increase and I decrease. Take in this sense also what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, which runs like this: "I joined you to one husband, to present a pure virgin to Christ." By "bride" he means the whole church, which is a pure virgin through the soundness of its teachings and its conduct.

^{45b} The same apostle, writing to another church, mentions Adam and the woman and adds: "This mystery is great, but I speak of Christ and the church." The point is that as those two became the parents of all human beings, so Christ and the church are the begetters of all good works, thoughts and words. John, then, is the friend of the bridegroom, as the word is interpreted. He stands beside him in firm agreement, because his faith in him is settled. Standing so, he rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's speaking. So he goes on to add, "This joy of mine is fulfilled," as all go away to Jesus. For he says, I have come to testify to him, so that all may believe in him through me. So he must increase and I must decrease. We must also observe this with wisdom. The Savior does not increase by taking on something, and John does not decrease by losing something. Each remains the same. What is said is to be understood like this. The morning star rises before the sun, so that the eyes may grow used to meeting a greater light, and it has a fixed size.

At the first glance it looks larger than the sun. But as the sun gradually appears, the morning star grows smaller. It has lost nothing of its own size. It is simply being compared with the sunlight now revealed. So John too is great in the fullness of his holiness. As said before, Jesus came after him, was baptized, and was testified to by him. After the dispensation concerning these things, when the divinity of Jesus was made plain, the one was shown to be the servant and the other the master.

FRAGMENT 46

For if he comes from above, from the Father, as the Almighty, it is clear that he is above all. But those who have a material mind wear the image of the man of dust, and they speak from the earth. So whenever they set themselves up to teach, the wisdom they have is the kind James writes about: earthly, soulish, demonic. Isaiah also writes about such people, as being from the earth and speaking from it. The Word of God, by contrast, comes from above, is above all, and speaks what he has seen and heard. The prophets too, since the Word came to them from above, speak heavenly and divine things, what they saw with the mind and heard with the ears of the inner man. For each of them will say, "Thus says the Lord," and, "The word of the Lord came to me." Solomon speaks of this more plainly when he says, "My words have been spoken by God." So it is written: "In many parts and in many ways God spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days he has spoken to us, to those living at the time of his visit, in a Son." Certainly, then, what he had seen and heard he spoke to people as a teacher. But this applies to the saving plan [the incarnate economy]; it would not be fitting to take these words as being about his divinity.

FRAGMENT 47

"And no one receives his testimony." Yet many had received his testimony, as John himself says again: "The one who has received his testimony has set his seal that God is true." How, then, can it be true that "no one receives his testimony" if some are receiving it? The difficulty is to be resolved this way. Jesus, who has come from above and speaks what he has heard and seen, gives a testimony about the Father and himself that is exalted and very great. No one receives this testimony as he himself delivers it, because the hearers, who are only at the beginning of receiving, fall far short of the greatness of the testimony. Still, even if no one is able to receive his testimony in that full

way, it can be received as far as those who are just now coming to faith are able to take it in. So the words “the one who has received his testimony” do not contradict the statement that no one has received it. It is not received in the other, full way, [text missing here] but those who have received the testimony of Jesus, as far as they can, seal with firm assent that God is true. They have learned that the one sent from him speaks the words of God, since he is not from the earth and does not speak from it. For God does not give the Spirit by measure [or: in part].

FRAGMENT 48

For even if wise men who had God spoke the words of God, they still had the Spirit of God only in part, since God says, “I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh.” But the Savior, sent to speak the words of God, does not give the Spirit in part. He does not give to others something he himself received; he was sent from above, is above all, and gives the Spirit as its source. We will also explain in another way the words “no one receives his testimony.” One who searches the Scriptures finds that they testify about Christ. None of the Jews who read the Scriptures without examining them received the testimony about him. Only the one who can say, “We have found Jesus, the one of whom Moses wrote in the law, and the prophets,” receives the testimony and seals that God is true, because he promised the gospel beforehand through the prophets. In other copies the text reads, “For he does not give the Spirit in part.” This reading also shows that the one who was sent does not attend to measures, so as to give sparingly, in part, and to a few who could be easily counted. Instead he gives lavishly and richly to all who are found worthy to receive.

FRAGMENT 49

On John 3:31, 34. There are heretics who twist their own minds in every way. They divide the Godhead. For that reason they say the old Scripture belongs to one God and set the new covenant under another. They claim that John said “He who is from the earth speaks from the earth” about himself and the other prophets, and said “For the one whom God sent speaks his words” about Christ and his apostles. They must be refuted, because what they teach is false, or rather impious. For the Baptist himself says of himself: “The one who sent me to baptize in water, that one said to me: ‘On whomever you see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, that one is the one who bap-

tizes in the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.” If the one who sent him to baptize is the Father, who told him about the descent of the Spirit and that the Christ is his Son, how can John, when he says what he heard from the Father of Christ, be speaking from the earth? The evangelist writes of him in the same way: “There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light.” Even if the prophets before John did speak from the earth, how could they testify about Christ? Yet the Savior said of their writings: “These are the ones that bear witness about me.”

FRAGMENT 50

50a On John 3:35. How could God not love, when he hates all wickedness? It is written of him: “I am God, who loves righteousness and hates robbery that comes from injustice.” God hates the kinds of wickedness in which the sinner delights. So he loves the Son as the one who supplies virtue, and who removes and destroys wickedness. This is why it is said, “The Father loves the Son.” The word “loves” is heard here in a rather human way, though it is not to be understood that way. For if God, who loves righteousness, does not love it as a righteous man does, by having it in himself and being shaped according to it, then in the same way he longs for the Son, who is Word, truth, wisdom and holiness. But the word can also show the Father’s close kinship with the Son. For it is a natural law that parents love their offspring. Among human beings, the feeling toward children is natural, and the feeling toward other people they love arises in some other way. In the same way God loves the world as God, but loves the Son as Father. This is why it is not said “God loves the Son,” but “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.”

50b This must be understood with faith and good sense. If “all things came into being through him,” then all things are under his hand according to the principle of creation and providence. But through sin they have wandered off, outside the hand that covered them. So for the sake of their salvation the Father gives them into the Son’s hand. He does not grant the Son an addition, but grants them an improvement. For he gives them to the Son as to a teacher and physician, so that the Son may make them free of ignorance and disease (that is, of wickedness) and may have them sheltered and ruled by him, holding them now under his active and caring hand. What follows shows the truth of this thought: “The one who believes in the

Son has eternal life.” For if the one who believes in the Son has eternal life, then being given into his hand is given for that person’s own salvation and improvement, not so that the Son may have something more. And when is it fulfilled that all things have been given into the Son’s hand? It is when every knee of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth bows to him.

FRAGMENT 51

In many places in the Scriptures, the punishments that fall on the wicked are called the wrath of God. An example is what Moses said about the Egyptians: “You sent out your wrath, and it consumed them like stubble.” Paul also writes about the Jews: “But the wrath has come upon them to the end.” By wrath he means the God-sent punishments that came upon them. He says it too to the one who despises God’s kindness and patience: “By your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath.” But we must not suppose that what is called God’s wrath is a passion in him. How could a passion belong to one who is beyond passion? Since God does not suffer, and does not change, we must interpret what is called his wrath in the way I have described.

FRAGMENT 52

Since he had a real body, made up of the same things as all human bodies, his body was necessarily subject to the common sufferings of the body. I do not mean only wounds and the like, but also the weariness that comes from strong and continuous movement. He had made a long journey at midday, when the sun is at its fiercest, and he took on greater weariness, because the moisture of his body was used up by the burning heat. For it was the sixth hour of the day. Wanting to rest from this weariness, he sat down by the spring in the place of Joseph mentioned earlier. At the same time he was looking ahead to the benefit that would come when a woman came to draw water from the spring.

FRAGMENT 53

Perhaps someone will ask the reason why Jews do not deal with Samaritans. It can be found in the third and fourth books of Kingdoms, and also in the second of Chronicles. The law said, “Do not touch what is unclean,” so they did not dare even to touch the flesh of foreigners, supposing that they would be defiled by it. Perhaps someone will also raise an objection to the words, “His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.” He will say: if Jesus

fed five thousand in the wilderness, and four thousand, along with a crowd of women and a great number of children, sometimes from five loaves and sometimes from seven, what great thing would it have been for the disciples to be supplied with food without going into the city to buy it, since Jesus could have provided it by his own power? To this we must answer that Jesus had become man. If he had done everything as God in truth, it would have gone unnoticed that he had become man. If he had acted in everything that way, his divinity would have overshadowed his humanity. So whenever there was need of a miracle, he fed many from a little, not so much to satisfy hunger as to reveal his divine power. But when there was no urgent need to supply food out of nothing, the disciples went off to buy bread. For even though Jesus did these things to show his humanity and reveal his divinity, many stumbled over the gospel. Some declared that he had become man only in appearance and not in truth; others supposed he was only a man. How much more would those who read this history without care and understanding have been deceived, if nothing had been done and written with exactness about the revealing of his divinity and his humanity?

FRAGMENT 54

54a On John 4:12. The Samaritan woman worked as hard as she could to remove the Jewish customs and teachings and to put the glory of the Samaritans above them. That is why, when the Saviour promised to give living water, she answered, "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" The Saviour knew how to order everything wisely. He knew it would be easy to strike down the Jewish claims on the spot, and to say "I am greater." But the woman's mind could picture nothing higher than what the senses can perceive. So he let that remark go by in silence. He chose other words, which could establish the same point just as well but would soften her hearing, and so he made her mind more ready. He did not bring in a comparison or a difference in glory himself. He left the poor woman to work out for herself, from what he was about to say, how great his superiority was. For he said, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst, ever." Notice the wisdom and force of these words. The statement "he will thirst again" needed no support from anywhere else, since the woman herself stood there as an unasked witness to it. But the statement "he will never thirst, ever" [was raised] by the greatness of its promise, rousing her by the promise itself.

^{54b} By both statements he was bringing her to stop and consider a more divine view of him. It is almost as if he were saying: "If you hold Jacob in great honour and think his deed marvellous, because he gave you water from which the drinker returns again to the same thirst, what must you think of me? I can give water that does not merely quiet bodily thirst for a short time. It can become for the one who drinks a spring of ever-flowing water. It offers streams of salvation, which water those who draw from them and win for them life." [The text is damaged here.] Water cures thirst and cleans away the dirt on the outside of the body. In the same way the spiritual and heavenly streams of Jesus' teaching, and the more divine understanding of him, heal the thirst that comes from unbelief. They also cleanse the soul from its filth, which the pollution of sins and the dark reasoning of ungodly opinions had made foul.

FRAGMENT 55

On John 4:12. By way of allegory we must say that Jacob's well is the writing of Moses. From it Jacob drank spiritually together with his sons, and the livestock that belonged to Jacob drank from it as well. In the allegory, "livestock" means those who are steady and gentle but without reason. These, properly speaking, we must call the herds and sheep of Jacob.

FRAGMENT 56

On John 4:13. The law given through Moses is the water. So how could Jesus say that the one who drinks from it will thirst again? We must say that the law was given to people not so that they should live by it forever, but only until a certain time. In the same way, drinking from the well, as it is interpreted, was to last only until a greater water was shown. For the commands of the law were laid down until the time of setting things right. So whoever drinks from the water of the law will thirst again, because he longs for the drink of the gospel. Take in this sense what was said in Isaiah: "Drink this first; do it quickly." If there were not another drink after that one, it would not have been said, "Drink this first." And since the gospel succeeds the law, whoever drinks the teaching of the law will thirst again so that he may also drink the teaching of the gospel. But the gospel has no successor, so whoever drinks from it will never thirst, ever. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." For he says that the one who drinks this water gets in himself a spring, and not of just any water, but of

water leaping up to eternal life. This water, leaping up to life, lifts up the one who has it, as a spring within him, and carries him upward to life.

FRAGMENT 57

When the woman said she wanted to receive water from Jesus so that her thirst would stop, since she would have the water as a spring within herself, she showed that this is what she wanted. By these words she admitted that drawing the earlier water was very wearisome, and in this she spoke truly. For keeping the Law according to the letter is very wearisome. The Savior then fittingly says to her: since you still cling to the one to whom you have devoted yourself, living with him as with a husband (the Law), go and call him, so that what is written in him may be compared with what I say and do. In this way you will be able to find that the one who drinks from the earlier water will look for another, because he will thirst again. When she denied that she had a husband, the Savior, gently exposing her Samaritan way of thinking, says: "You are right to say, 'I have no husband.'" For you did not agree with the whole of the Old Testament, which is the Law, about which it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." Not having this husband, you had five, because you agreed only with what is perceptible in the Scripture. For if you had lived with the whole of the Old Testament, you would have been able to recognize God the Word, whom it expected after the Law and the Prophets. The words "For you have had five husbands" must be referred to the five books of Moses, for these alone the Samaritans accept. But who is the sixth, whom she has besides the five husbands, and who is not even her husband? We must say it is the teaching that there is a prophet. For she had already agreed to this, under compulsion from what was said, but not with true agreement. So it was fittingly said: "And the one you now have is not your husband," for you have not come to him sincerely. And since her five husbands were also said to be the senses, after she had agreed, without precise understanding by any spiritual reasoning, to what she learned from Jesus' teaching, it was said most exactly to the mark: "And the one you now think you have, a spiritual word, is not your husband."

FRAGMENT 58

When you hear that salvation is from the Jews, listen to what is said about the one who says this. For he himself was the expectation of the nations, the one born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

FRAGMENT 59

The question "Surely no one has brought him anything to eat?" shows that he accepted the services of those who offered them, although he was able to feed others and not be fed himself. Yet feeding Christ is a work of the greatest effect, and he did not begrudge it to those who wished to do it. That is why he assigned the same to the disciples. Being men trained in the Law and fond of learning, they considered that it was now time for a meal. They guessed that perhaps, as a meal had been brought to Daniel in Babylon by Habakkuk at God's command, and as food was given to Elijah on his journey by an angel and by ravens, so food had been brought to Jesus. Yet even if the disciples supposed this about physical food, he himself makes clear what kind of food he had told them about. They said it was the time for his meal for this reason: it was the sixth hour of the day, and Jesus had sat down at the well and talked with the Samaritan woman, while the disciples had gone off to buy food, so that one could reasonably guess it was now evening of the day. But this time for food belongs especially to those who do not chiefly pursue food, but the benefit of those who come to them.

FRAGMENT 60

He calls Judea his homeland, and for this reason he had left it. For the evangelist, giving the reason for his coming to Galilee, writes that "a prophet has no honor in his own homeland." This testimony is also found in the other Gospels. For the Savior says: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own homeland, and among his relatives, and in his own house." Indeed, all those before his coming were dishonored in Jerusalem and Judea, for this was their land and homeland, so that the Savior said in general: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her."

FRAGMENT 61

"Now there is," he says, "in Jerusalem..." and so on. He did not think it necessary to go around healing every sick person, whoever they were, so that he would not gain a reputation for self-love. Instead he healed one person and made himself known to everyone through him. For this reason he goes to the sheep pool, which had five porches. Besides the four around it, it had another in the middle. It was called the sheep pool because the sheep brought for the feasts were gathered there. It was also called that because, when the sheep were sacrificed, their entrails were washed in that water. So a great

crowd of people with all kinds of illnesses had gathered in the place, hoping to be healed. They supposed the water itself could do something, since the entrails of animals offered and sacrificed to God were thrown into it. God worked along with this belief of theirs. At certain unknown times he caused the water to be stirred. They believed this happened by some divine working, and so they went down into it and received healing. Many went down at the same moment without being healed, but the first to go down enjoyed the grace, so that the ease of the cure would not lessen the wonder. Because they were more sober, and waited for the stirring of the water with great earnestness, they were taught from this to keep a fitting attitude even after being healed. Although there were many sick people, he did not heal them all. To show his own power he chose one, who was held by a very heavy affliction and, because of the length of time, had no hope of recovery. For there was a paralytic among them who had been held by his illness for thirty-eight years. When he came to him, he did not say at once, "Take up your bed and walk." He began instead with words that followed on from the man's own situation. This is also what he did with the Samaritan woman.

FRAGMENT 62

"What Spirit was not yet?" ... [the Spirit] was not seen in any of the prophets; they were working wonders.

FRAGMENT 63

^{63a} I think this was said to show that the spittle of Christ had the quality of a healing power. The blind man himself did not ask to see. Even so, he will be found praiseworthy, both for offering himself to Jesus as he smeared mud on his eyes, and for doing what he was told without hesitation, though Jesus had not even said that he would see. Perhaps the Lord's spittle was a symbol of a [summit], the furthest point in words, beyond which human nature cannot take in anything greater. But such a word does not come to people stripped of matter and bodily illustrations. This is why Jesus spits on the ground and makes mud. So see whether you can explain the whole Scripture, and the manner in which it speaks, and say this. On account of its divine thoughts, it is made up of the spittle of Christ. On account of its account of events and human affairs, it is made up of earth from the ground. So the whole letter of the law, the prophets and the other Scriptures comes from such mud. With this the eyes of those who do not see must be smeared. After that they must

go away to Siloam, “of the one sent” by God. By this is shown a kind of swimming in inquiries and in the perplexities of seeking the truth. For Job also says somewhere, “But a mortal swims otherwise in words.” So let us wash the mud smeared on our eyes in the water of the pool “of the one sent,” so that after this we may be able to see.

^{63b} Take the clay to be the beginning of the elements of God’s oracles. By these we are fed with milk, as infants. But when the ways of the infant are done away and we take solid food, we throw off the clay, so that we may come back to Jesus with our sight. All of this turns on the Son of God, for under different aspects he is also “the one who was sent.” Take the human matters as belonging to the time before Siloam. But apply the water that was sent, and Siloam, to his more divine aspects. In Isaiah, too, you will understand the divine and steady word to be signified by these waters. The words of [Mnon?] and of those who hold other doctrines are signified by Raasson and the son of Romelias. For how is it that the people wanted kings in place of the water of Siloam? And how is the water of the river strong and abundant, namely the king of the Assyrians and all his power, unless he too is some opposing power? Such a power floods with the multitude of its persuasive arguments the Judea that does not want the water of Siloam, and [it prevails over it]. Jesus did not heal the man while he was present. He told him to go and wash, and gave the healing once he had washed. This was part of his careful ordering, so that the miracle would not go unnoticed by anyone. In the same way he told the paralytic to take up his bed on a day when it was not permitted to do so. Each person who accused him of breaking the law would then learn how great the miracle was. So also here, the man was far from the pool, and Jesus told him to go there and wash.

FRAGMENT 64

A beggar begs because he lacks the necessities and cannot provide for himself in a more respectable way. You could find such people among the Greeks and barbarians who profess the truth. They are, as it were, asking for help because they lack a fitting supply [. . .], though the rational side of truth has an abundance of riches without any anxiety. But the word forbids this kind of search when it says somewhere, “Child, do not live the life of begging, for it is better to die than to beg.” The steward of unrighteousness in the Gospels is ashamed to beg. For that reason he said to the man who owed a hundred measures of wheat, “Take your bill and write sixty,” and to the one who

owed a hundred measures of oil, "Take your bill and make it eighty." He preferred to receive from his master's debtors rather than to beg in shame, and for this he was praised. So Jesus freed the man born blind not only from blindness but also from begging. Along with sight he gave him the insight to see how he would provide for himself what is necessary for the salvation of the soul. Here, then, blindness is the cause of begging. In the Acts it is lameness, and the person set free from it will no longer beg.

FRAGMENT 65

The Pharisees supposed that a man who does not keep what they thought was the Sabbath is not from God. But the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and they were from God. So it was not clear at all that a man who does not keep their Sabbath is not from God. It follows that the statement was not made by all the Pharisees of that time. As the evangelist says, it was some of the Pharisees who said this. Pay attention also to the words "such signs," which are not put there for nothing. There are different kinds of signs. According to the apostle, the man in the law does them, and so does the lawless one whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth, with all power, signs and wonders of falsehood. God also does them through the prophets. By "such" it is said that the signs done through Christ surpass the others, because they are true and great on earth. Someone may say that the words "How can a sinful man do such signs?" are not soundly spoken [. . .]. Reading the deeds of Samson, he will say that what Samson did, for example with women, was not even sin, but that what is shown there is a matter of God's ordering. For it is not added that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord."

FRAGMENT 66

Note the person of the evangelist: he says both that the blind man's eyes were opened and that he had received sight. They were opened, in the words, "Now it was a Sabbath on the day when he made the clay and opened his eyes." He had received sight, in the words, "And he washed and came seeing." We can bring in a parallel for the difference between these expressions from Tobit. Since white films had formed on his eyes, the book does not record that his eyes were opened, but that he looked up and saw. Throughout the whole passage about the blind man you will notice both expressions, some people saying one thing and some another, and a division arising

among them. You will notice also that Isaiah, prophesying about the coming of Christ, says that he comes to open the eyes of the blind. Next you can see how the man who was answering replies, and how differently he answers the first group and the second. To the first he answers more exactly, since they were neighbors and had formerly seen that he was a beggar. To the Pharisees he told nothing about Siloam, nor that the Savior made the clay, nor that he had commanded him anything. Perhaps the man who had been healed saw that the first group's questioning was honest and the second group's malicious, and so answered each as he did.

FRAGMENT 67

Besides lying, they committed another sin, by exposing their own son to an obvious evil. I think this too has a reason: when Christ opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not open those of a child but of one of full age, so that he might see as a man. The other blind people who regained their sight were of this kind too. It is true also that, being of age, he could speak for himself, and above all when Jesus is the one who makes him see. For this man needs no other to plead on his behalf.

FRAGMENT 68

Now "You did not listen" is equal to "You did not accept it, you did not want it." And "Why then do you want to hear again?" has the force of: "Why, you people, would you now hear? You want to hear in vain, if you do not believe me when I tell the truth. I summoned everyone who would learn what had happened to me, to become his disciple, since he taught things more divine than any human teaching."

FRAGMENT 69

"In this is a marvel" carries a significant implication. It is indeed marvelous if people of no account know where Jesus is from, for they do not see his root and his source, the Father.

FRAGMENT 70

If this had been true, so weighty a doctrine, that God does not hear a sinner, would not have been passed over in silence. It would have been stated by someone worthy of belief, say by the servant or by one of the prophets. And if God did not hear a sinner, how were sinners taught to say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive our debtors"? Whom then does God hear? Those who incline toward repentance, even if they have not yet stopped being sin-

ners. If God did not hear sinners, our Savior would not have eaten and drunk with tax collectors and sinners. And if the physicians whom the sick need were not heard, they would not have healed them. This is why the saying, "If you keep watch on lawless deeds, Lord, Lord, who will stand?" is spoken as of a prayer that is not heard, coming from those who have sinned but not wholly still in unbelief. But perhaps he is speaking not of whatever the sinner happens to ask in prayer, but of works as great as the works of Jesus were. For when sinners ask God for works of that kind, he does not hear.

FRAGMENT 71

71a Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" The Jews threw him out, away from themselves, because he spoke so boldly about the Savior. For that reason Jesus found him. The Savior came to seek and to save the lost. The goal of anyone who seeks is to find what he seeks. So the words "when he found him" clearly should not be taken in a simple way. This man most of all needed to be found at the moment when he was thrown out by those who would not accept the testimony about Jesus. Once he was outside them, he had become fit to be found. The words "Jesus heard that they had thrown him out" also call for a more thoughtful reading. Having heard such a thing, Jesus finds the one he had heard about to be worthy of his hearing. When he found him, he asked the man who was found, "Do you believe in the Son of man who has found you?" Perhaps the one who is only beginning believes in the Son of man, but the one who crosses over goes up further, to believe in the Son of God. Such a man could then say, "Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him only according to the flesh, but also as the Son of God."

71b But how can he ask a question, when he knows everything? And consider whether you would answer this by setting beside it the words "The Lord knew those who are his" and "I do not know you." For a person is not worthy to be known at the very moment he is found. The saying is, "But now that you have known God, or rather have been known by him." After the introduction, progress is needed, so that a person may be seen and known by God. This is why the Savior asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" But the man could not yet say "I believe." He answered like someone who did not know: "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" So he stood on

the border, so to speak, between unbelief and faith. For this reason the Savior says to him, “You have both seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”

FRAGMENT 72

For such a tradition and opinion prevailed among the Jews. That is why the disciples asked Jesus, “Did this man sin, or his parents?” But the Lord declared, “Neither this man nor his parents.” This was discussed earlier.

FRAGMENT 73

We must not hear this carelessly. “You have seen” refers to past time, but “the one speaking with you” refers to the present. The one who was seen is the same as the one now speaking with him. Set beside this the words, “Have I been with you so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father.” For many who saw him did not know him. So the one who has truly seen him is the one whose eyes of the soul are enlightened by God himself. The man who was once blind was helped by both, by the seeing and by the word. He not only said, “I believe, Lord,” but also worshiped him. Not least, he looks at the drama of the stoning, since he (that is, Origen) tries to interpret this too as an allegory, and so he falsifies the gospel text. He says, “We did not find at all, though we searched in the passages before this, that the Jews picked up stones to stone him.” Then a little later he says, “For if they picked them up again, they had picked them up before.”

FRAGMENT 74

^{74a} “If ‘again’ they picked up stones, then they had picked them up before.” So if we do not miss that this is written, we must ask why the word “again” was added. I think that a person who speaks evil of someone is throwing a kind of stone at the one he slanders. They had spoken evil of him earlier, when a division arose among the Jews because of his words. So now they had again taken up the weight of abusive words, like stones to be hurled at him, and rushed to [strike] him with their slander. This is why Wisdom says, “He who throws a stone high throws it on his own head.” A man is said to throw a stone high when he speaks injustice against what is on high. In divine Scripture you will find a mixture of what is, so to speak, historical with what is meant for training the mind, and especially in John. Notice in the conversation with the Samaritan woman how “Jesus sat down at the spring” is a report about a physical spring and a physical body. But it is no longer possible

to understand a physical drink when “Jesus answered and said to her: If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

74b And there are similar sayings: “I have shown you many works; for which of them do you stone me?” Suppose someone went back to the beginning of the Gospel and collected the works of Jesus, and then carried them up to their spiritual workings. He would see best what many works Jesus showed to those who picked up stones to stone him. One of the good works, for example, was the sign at Cana, when the former wine ran short. This was because of the saying, “The law and the prophets were until John.” The good thing is that we have been supplied with wine, we with whom Jesus sits at table. This was the beginning of his signs, in the calling of the people from the [nations]. For it is also written, “Jesus did this as the beginning of the signs.” The next work after this was his restoring of his own house, which had become a house of merchandise, so that it would again be the house of his Father. And why must I tell all the good works he has done from his Father?

FRAGMENT 75

He did this so as not to make his divinity too plainly visible. If he stayed on longer with those who were eager to seize him and yet was not seized, he would also falsify the rhythm of the human order. Consider also whether there is some reason why it is not written simply, “He went away to the [Jordan],” but “beyond” it, “on the other side.” In the same way, those who received the land as an inheritance through Moses were lesser than those who receive it through Jesus, and they were allotted their portion on the far side of the Jordan. There they built an altar, a symbol of the altar in the holy land, but they offered no sacrifice or whole burnt offerings on it. But now we hear the words more figuratively: “He went away across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first.” Moreover, Joshua son of Nun brings the people across from the far side of the Jordan with marvelous powers. And Elijah, when he was about to be taken up, as it were to heaven, in a chariot of fire with horses of fire, divided the stream of the river with his mantle and crossed over from the far side of the Jordan.

FRAGMENT 76

76a “They sought again to seize him; and he went out of their hand.” In the higher sense, there are some who want to hunt down the word of Christianity, to overturn and destroy it. These could now be said to be seeking to seize Jesus. But “Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul,” and “Power that is tested in the word convicts the foolish.” Therefore he goes out. When the word of truth seems to those who hold it to be in their hand, it is in fact outside their hand, since they cannot keep hold of it. So even when they think they are overturning it, they are not overturning the truth, for they themselves do not understand. Having gone out of their hand, he comes to the river Jordan, whose name is interpreted [the meaning is missing in the text]. There the heavens are opened and bear witness to the Word: “This is the Son of God, in whom the Father was well pleased.” Even if someone is on the far side of the river, if he draws near he will find Jesus baptizing better than John. For John baptized first with the perceptible baptism, but Jesus with the intelligible one, since he baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. This is rather like the fire seen at the bush, which did not burn it up.

76b Look carefully at the words “where John was at first baptizing.” They are ambiguous. Once you see both meanings the wording allows, judge which one should be accepted. John baptized first beyond the Jordan, and second at Aenon, near Salim. So either Jesus went away beyond the Jordan, where John had earlier baptized, with the baptism that John gave at Aenon. Or it runs like this: John gave the first baptism beyond the Jordan, and Jesus the Christ gave the second where John had given the first. The second reading seems to me more reasonable than the first. Someone might also say the following about the first reading. John gives the first baptism beyond the Jordan, which is interpreted [“descent”]. He gives the second at Aenon, near Salim. Aenon is interpreted “Eye,” and Salim, “He himself the [...]” So those who receive the second [washing] (the Greek reads “ransom”) already see more clearly. They have won the eye of the soul through much testing and toil. And it was fitting that the first baptism should belong to one going down, and the second to one going up.

FRAGMENT 77

We find the name of Lazarus twice in the Gospels. The first is in Luke, in the parable of the rich man and the man called Lazarus, when he died and went

away into Abraham's bosom. The second is in the passage before us. Is this a shared name belonging to two different Lazaruses, or is the one the same as the other? Someone who wants both evangelists to be speaking of one man will say this. In the three days between (for Lazarus rose on the fourth day), he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom and found rest. And because of what the rich man said, "I ask you, father, to send him to my father's house, so that they too may not come to this place of torment," Abraham did not send him, saying, "They have Moses and the prophets." But our Savior and Lord raised him up. Perhaps, in what is left unsaid, it was so that he might report what he had seen, and the arrangements made concerning souls. But this is nonsense. The one beside the rich man was destitute and thrown down at the gate. The other had sisters, Mary and Martha, who were well off and well known among the Jews, so that they could even receive Jesus. And hear what the evangelist John himself says: "Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with ointment." Would she, who had ointment and was loved by Jesus, have had no pity on her brother, who longed to be filled with the crumbs falling from the rich man's table? That could not make sense. He was from Bethany, which is interpreted "House [of obedience]." Perhaps everyone from Bethany, being at home in obedience, is a friend of Jesus. But human nature is changeable. So even a friend of Jesus may sometimes fall sick. He may fall sick when Jesus is not present to him, and not only fall sick but even die.

FRAGMENT 78

It is clear that this Mary is also the one in Luke who anointed the Lord with ointment. But Luke kept her name silent, and John supplied what he had left out. Who would not be turned aside by such a testimony of Jesus about Mary, so that he does not despair of himself because of his former sins, but comes and sits at Jesus' feet and becomes his disciple? For she, he says, "was a woman in the city, a sinner." She "learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, and brought an alabaster flask of ointment. Standing behind, at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears." Someone might say that Mary is a symbol of those from [the Gentiles], and Martha of those from the circumcision. Their brother, who rises from the dead, would then stand for those who have gone down to Hades because of certain sins, in line with the words, "Let sinners be turned back into Hades." And he could say, not implausibly, that it was because of the way of life under the law of Moses

that it was said to Martha, “Martha, Martha, you are troubled and distracted about many things, but few things are needed.” For salvation does not need the many commandments of the law according to the letter. It needs the few on which the whole law and the prophets hang, the commands laid down about love.

FRAGMENT 79

79a On John 11:4. Taken as a symbol, let it point to the death in the historical sense. Taken as a lifting of the mind to a higher meaning, let it present the death into which people sometimes fall asleep when God has not enlightened the eyes of their soul. Not everyone who is unenlightened falls asleep into death; it is only one of the possibilities. [text missing] For this reason the psalmist says, “Enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep into death.” Pay careful attention to the word “lest.” So Jesus told the disciples plainly, since the first time he had spoken in figures: “Lazarus has fallen asleep,” and “I rejoice for your sake that I was not there.” If he had been there, Lazarus would not have died, for it is impossible for anyone to die when Jesus is present. But for the dead man to rise from the dead, Jesus must come to him. “For your sake,” he says, “I rejoice.” He rejoices for them because they believe once they learn that Lazarus died while he was not with him, and so that they may be strengthened in faith. He alone, then, wakes Lazarus from sleep. The work of the disciples was to loose the dead man, who was bound hand and foot with grave-bands and had his face wrapped in a cloth, bound with the bonds of the dead, and to let him go where Jesus commanded. Thomas says, “Let us go, that we may die with him.” Thomas had read the prophecies about the Saviour. It is likely too that he had heard there remained for the Son of God a dispensation concerning souls. He was going to carry it out by going down into their place, to preach to the spirits in prison, going to those who had once been disobedient. When he heard, “I am going to wake him,” he supposed that Lazarus could be woken and raised from the dead in no other way than by Jesus going down into the place of souls. The Saviour had also said, “No one takes my soul from me, but I lay it down of myself,” and similar things. So Thomas, as his true disciple, resolved to follow him wherever he might go. He wanted the other disciples also, by the grace of Jesus, to lay aside the body together with him.

79b Perhaps he also knew that it would not be possible to live together with Jesus unless one had died together with him, as Paul also seems to hold.

But those who do not want to say that he spoke for this reason will say that he suspected the coming envy of the Jews because of Lazarus's rising, and the danger that would follow, and so said this. "Jesus therefore came and found him having been four days in the tomb." The number four is material and bodily, and it is harmful, since the general kinds of body are four. Hence those who are enslaved and ill-treated suffer for four hundred years, according to what is said: "They will ill-treat them and humble them four hundred years." Perhaps for this reason, to cleanse away the sins that follow the nature of the body, Moses fasts forty days, and Elijah likewise, and the Saviour on behalf of our sins. And so now Jesus came and found Lazarus already four days in the tomb, which is the dwelling-place of the dead. For to sinners tombs are houses. That is why the demon-possessed flee to the tombs as to a place of their own. As long as they are inside, no one has the strength to pass by that road. But when they come out and put off their nakedness, they are clothed and in their right mind, and they sit at the feet of Jesus. Jesus, however, is laid in a new tomb and wrapped in clean linen, and he does not reach the fourth day among the dead. Therefore he was also "free among the dead," and he is raised in the free and holy number, three. In that number he also sanctifies us by the washing of water, saying that we must be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

FRAGMENT 79B

On John 11:14. Beginning: "The slowness of the removal of the one lying upon . . ." Ending: ". . . they took away the stone." Catena of Nicetas (manuscripts B and C); see above, Z. XXVIII, 3, p. 391, line 13.

FRAGMENT 80

Bethany is translated "House of obedience," and [Jerusalem . . . the text is broken here]. So it lies near, at a distance of fifteen stades, the same as the number of the temple's steps. The number fifteen divides into seven, for the sabbath, and eight, for circumcision. The Preacher advises giving a portion to these two alone: "Give a portion," he says, "to seven, and also to eight." Suppose Mary is a symbol of the contemplative life, Martha of the active life, and Lazarus of the person who has fallen into sins after coming to faith. Then it is fitting that Mary and Martha mourn Lazarus, and that in their mourning they need comfort about their brother. The Jews want to bring them this comfort, but they are only words belonging to the time before the

fullness of time. They also despair of being able to stop the dead man's sister [from grieving] over the dead man. Martha now seems more zealous than Mary, since Martha ran to Jesus while Mary stayed at home, sitting. Some people, like the centurion, are not fit to receive Jesus; others are worthy, like the synagogue ruler. So Martha, as the lesser of the two, ran to Jesus, while Mary waits at home to receive him, as one able to take in his coming. She would not have gone out of her own house unless she had heard her sister say, "The Teacher is here and is calling you." And when she got up, she did not simply get up but did so quickly. She fell at Jesus' feet and said what she said, though her sister had not fallen down.

FRAGMENT 81

The Saviour was not ignorant whether Martha believed what was being said. He asks, "Do you believe this?" so that we, or those who were present then, might learn her state of mind from her answer. Someone else will say that he is not asking at all but declaring, "You believe this." Then Martha completes the Saviour's declaration and says, "Yes, Lord." It is as if she said: "I do not believe only what you are saying. As for your being the Christ, I do not believe it only now, but I have believed it already. And I believe that you are the Son of God who comes into the world," pointing this out for all who believe in you.

FRAGMENT 82

Someone examining the matter at the higher, allegorical level might ask why she says, "If you had been here." Is there some place where Jesus is not? Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them. But he also stands in the midst of others who do not know him. So he was present to Mary and Martha. They had not yet advanced far enough to know him as present.

FRAGMENT 83

Do not be surprised that "Where have you laid him?" is said as if by someone who does not know. Scripture says that not only the Saviour but the Father too is ignorant, in a certain sense, as in the words: "If anyone among you is spiritual, let him recognize what I write to you, that it is from God; but if anyone is ignorant, he is ignored." He asks, "Where have you laid him?" in the same way that he commands the disciples to leave the dead. And Jesus weeps if any of his friends ends up in a tomb.

FRAGMENT 84

While he was still far from the tomb, he was deeply moved in spirit. But when he comes near the dead man, he no longer shows his indignation in spirit but holds it in within himself. That is why it says, "Being indignant within himself, he comes to the tomb." Then again he rebukes the emotion, so that we may learn that he became man, without changing, as we are. "Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it." He was not laid in a built tomb but in one cut out of rock. Perhaps that is why there is a woe on those who build graves or tombs. What should be built are houses, a temple, and whatever is useful to the living. Then he says, "Take away the stone." Since the cave was a tomb, he did not touch the stone himself but entrusted its removal to others suited to the task. But in Genesis there was a stone lying on the mouth of the well and keeping the sheep from drinking, the sheep from which the marked animals and Jacob's portion were to come. There Jacob himself had to take hold of it, go up to the stone and roll it away. So at the well it was necessary for Jacob himself to come forward, but at the cave Jesus was to stand outside.

FRAGMENT 85

On John 11:51. It is not true that whoever prophesies is a prophet. Rather, whoever is a prophet prophesies. Balaam, for example, was a diviner, and yet he prophesies. Someone who does one medical thing is not thereby a physician, and someone who does one piece of building is not thereby a builder. Some want to say that Caiaphas did not speak by the Holy Spirit. They point to David, who after sinning says, "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." The Spirit, they say, does not dwell in a body burdened with sin, so Caiaphas spoke by the working of evil spirits. For they say demons can sometimes foretell things. An example is the spirit of Python in the case of Paul, and in the case of the Savior the words, "Ha, what have we to do with you, Son of God?" We learn, then, that people do not say everything from themselves. Some things they say while moved by a power, either a better one or a worse one. Still, just as some of the heterodox [distort] the sense of Scripture, so the Pharisees take what Caiaphas said according to their own way of thinking.

FRAGMENT 86

On John 11:54. The Word wishes to turn us back from throwing ourselves at dangers too thoughtlessly and hotly, even when the danger is for the truth's

sake. If we are overtaken, we should stand firm; if we are only about to be caught, we should withdraw, because the outcome is uncertain. As for the higher meaning, we must say this. Long ago Jesus walked openly among the Jews through the prophets, but now he no longer does. The word of God is not in them, and he has gone away from them into the wilderness. Of that wilderness it is said, "Many are the children of the desolate, more than of her who has the husband." He went near Ephraim, a name that is interpreted [as follows: being the brother of Manasseh, the elder, whose name means "from forgetfulness"]. For after the people "from forgetfulness" comes the "fruitfulness" of the nations. There he stayed with his disciples, and so he is present with "fruitfulness." At the birth of Ephraim, the Lord himself, [our] dispenser of grain, who humbled himself and became obedient to death, could say: "God has made me grow in the land of my humbling."

FRAGMENT 87

On John 12:26. The one who follows him serves him by that very following. The one who serves him is his servant. For this reason, where the Word is, there the servant is too. But this announcement must not be understood in a bodily or local sense. Still, suppose there is, as among bodily places, a region of the upper air among the purest places, brighter with the fineness of light. Then someone would not be wrong to say that those who are in the body and who receive at the resurrection, each according to his worth, a body of surpassing and distinct glory, will be in those regions. Those regions are the most suitable for leisure spent in contemplating the things of God the Word. In thought, "where God the Word is, there his servant will be" is one thing. In fact it is the same as being honored by the Father. For through the honor that comes from the Father, the one honored comes to be where God the Word is.

FRAGMENT 88

On John 12:27. At the time of the saving passion, all the powers of Satan together with their leader [alone] marched out against the Savior. When the Savior's soul saw them, it was troubled in a human way. It did not shrink from death, though even that would be human. What it feared was being defeated. For Christ allowed his soul at times to suffer what was its own. And since he was going to become the cause of eternal salvation for those who obey him, his soul was grieved and troubled on their account. Nor was it

overpowered by the trouble, as someone might suppose. It was troubled only for an instant, and that is what the word “now” means. As soon as the trouble began it also ceased, and, so to speak, it was a mere point of time. Notice also that he himself prays that the contest against the evil powers arrayed against him might take place not over a stretch of time but in the “now.” That was enough for the soul of Jesus to conquer the whole power of the evil one.

FRAGMENT 89

His suffering on the cross was the judgment of this whole world. He “made peace through the blood of his cross, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.” With a triumph on the wood he stripped off the rulers and authorities, and he sat down in the heavenly places, restoring all things to the end that suits and fits each one. The plan worked out on the cross held together the judgment of every single being. So when the time of his suffering drew near, he said, “Now is the judgment of this world.”

FRAGMENT 90

The suffering of our Savior took place for the cleansing of [those fore-known], among whom the world was about to be judged. That is why it was said, “Now is the judgment of this world.” It is as if he were saying: “This is the time when those who judge the world will be shown.” Or, since the tyrant was about to be cast down at the time of the saving passion, the words were spoken, “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out,” or perhaps this refers to the outer darkness. They convict him [that is, the crowd] of ignorance about the prophets, and they show that their knowledge of the Scriptures is not exact. They have taken from such words the idea that the Christ remains forever. But the mystery of death that comes in between, and the brief separation of the soul from the body, they neither understood nor examined closely. They ought to have known the reason. Two comings of Christ were prophesied. The crowd of the Jews hoped for the more glorious one, which will happen at the end of the age. The one that comes before it they did not understand at all. This is why their house is left to them.

FRAGMENT 91

To everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance. So also from the one who does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away. Suppose someone receives the mina and wraps it up in a napkin.

He will hear, "The light is among you for a little while longer." For the words "Take the mina from him" are just about to be spoken, since "the one who is unrighteous in little is unrighteous also in much." One might also explain the passage in this way. As the kingdom of God was among the Jews, so the light was also among them. They did not render the fruits that belong to the kingdom of God, and so they heard, "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that produces its fruits." In the same way, the light was among them, but they did not walk in it so as to avoid being overtaken by darkness. So after a short time the light that was in them was taken away from them. It was given to the nation that produces the fruits of the light, which has become like the stars of heaven and is called the light of the world. That nation has received this from the one who said, "I am the light of the world."

FRAGMENT 92

92a On John 12:39–40. Holy Scripture knows that we have free will. It blames sinners as people who are at fault through their own doing, and it praises those who keep the divine commandment as people who deserve praise through their own doing. Listen to what it says in Deuteronomy: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you, except to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and his ordinances, all that I command you today, so that it may be well with you?" And in Micah: "Has it been told you, O man, what is good? Or what does the Lord seek from you, except to do justice and love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God?" As far as these texts go, then, each of us can become righteous or unrighteous. So you will understand "He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts" as referring to the evil one, as was said before: he blinded the eyes of some and crippled their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes, and would not understand with their heart, and would not turn, and the Lord would not heal them. For the text does not say "that they might not turn and he might heal them" in the same way it says "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart." So the one who blinds the eyes and hardens the heart is one person, and the one who heals those who turn, and those who are broken in heart, and the blind, is another.

^{92b} The apostle says the same thing in the second letter to the Corinthians: “And if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled among those among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine through.” It is no surprise that people who have given themselves over to the evil one through their sins are blinded in their eyes by him, and have their own hearts hardened at his will, since he does everything so that they will not see with their eyes, understand with their heart, and turn. As for the words “For this reason they could not believe,” we must say the following. Take the man blind from birth, whom our Savior later healed. If someone said of him, “He cannot see, because he is blind,” he would not mean that it was impossible for him ever to see. It was possible, since Jesus, who opens the eyes of the blind, grants sight to the blind, so that those who until then could not see would see later. In the same way, those who at one time could not believe because their eyes had been blinded by the evil one were not unable to believe if they came to Jesus, said “Son of David, have mercy on us,” and asked to receive their sight. As for the fact that the passage in the Gospel is not worded exactly as it stands in the prophet, that is no surprise. The writers who served the words of the New Covenant did this in many places, as we have observed elsewhere. In any case, the words of Isaiah carry the same force as those set down in the Gospel.

FRAGMENT 93

^{93a} On John 12:44. In the passage before us we should notice that two things are said about the Savior. The first is what comes first: believing in him comes first. The second is what comes second, and it follows along the way: this goes beyond believing. It is to behold the Word, and in beholding the Word to behold the Father. Believing reaches the whole multitude of those who come to him in godliness. But beholding the Word, and perceiving the Father in him, no longer reaches all who believe, but only the pure in heart. This is how I understand the saying, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father.” The person who turns the power of sight in his bodily eyes on the body of Jesus has not thereby seen the Father, who is Jesus’ God. I think a person also needed time and training together with him in order to see Jesus in this way, and in seeing the Son to behold the Father as well. That is why, when Philip said, “Show us the Father, and that is enough for us,” Jesus said, “I have been with you so long a time, and you have not known me? The one

who has seen me has seen the Father.” Now consider, if you can, the difference between believing and beholding, and look closely enough to grasp why the saying “The one who believes in me does not believe in me but in the one who sent me” is not worded like the saying “And the one who beholds me beholds the one who sent me,” and why the second is not put in a way similar to the first, “The one who believes in me does not believe in me but in the one who sent me.”

^{93b} For the one who believes in the Son believes not in the Son only but in the Father of all, who is God. But the one who beholds the Word, the Wisdom and the Truth does not behold this alone but the Father also. I think that the mystery being made known is great. It involves first believing in the Son and second beholding him. To show this, the words “Jesus cried out and said” were set before “The one who believes in me and beholds me,” for the voice that spoke of these things was a great and mysterious one. That it is possible to believe the truth and yet not to behold it, the evangelist will make clear when he says, “Jesus was saying to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you remain in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” Notice carefully that he says to those who had believed, “If you remain in my word, you will know the truth,” as to people who had not yet come to know the truth but had only believed it.

FRAGMENT 94

On John 12:46. The true light shone, for the Savior of the world had come. But they were unwilling to look steadily at it or to walk in the radiance that shines from his teachings. So the darkness, as one would expect, overtook them, exacting a penalty for the wickedness that already held them. This may fittingly be called being blinded and hardened. And just as the one who is willing to walk in the light also comes to know where he is going, so the one who is unwilling to walk in the light finds himself going on in the dark, and wretchedly finishes the road of the blind and hardened. It was said earlier that the lightning flash of the Lord’s saving teaching branded the Jews as blind and hardened. It made the damage and the blindness that were already in the eyes of their souls more evident and plain. For just as the visible sun, sending out its bright rays, exposes those whose eyes are diseased, so too the sun of the mind, having marked out for the world the light that never sets and knows no evening, and having flashed the brightness of his own deity through miracles worthy of God and beyond words, exposed even more fully

the darkness that had already seized the eyes of the souls of the senseless Jews, and their blindness.

FRAGMENT 95

After this you will ask, because the words were spoken together, “What shall I say and what shall I speak?”, whether saying and speaking differ, or whether they are the same thing, stated in parallel. So set out the passages where “He said” is recorded, and examine them alongside those where “He spoke” is used. It may also help the inquiry that throughout the whole account of creation God is never recorded as having “spoken,” while “He said” is written of him. Consider too what is said again and again in Leviticus: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying.” See whether you can claim that “said” signifies a command given from authority, and “spoke” signifies teaching. “And I know that his commandment is eternal life.” One might ask here why it is not said that God’s commandment secures eternal life, but that it is, in its very substance, eternal life itself. It is like knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent. So each of these is eternal life. But if God’s commandment is eternal life, and God’s commandment is in the righteous person, who lives blessedly because of it, then that life is worth choosing.

FRAGMENT 96

The first one, the one before the consummation, is indeed best ... he himself will wash them.

FRAGMENT 97

But he did not begin with Peter ... to remain in what was wrongly judged.

FRAGMENT 98

The words of the prophecy have been paraphrased ... because this is what a person does who lashes out at someone with his heel.

FRAGMENT 99

For he says that this is what is going to happen ... and through this the knowledge about me.

FRAGMENT 100

Note in what way, among the matters under examination ... is blameworthy when done with deceit.

FRAGMENT 101

The morsel given by Jesus ... Satan entered into him.

FRAGMENT 102

Not only in the simpler sense did he go out ... But let us, being people of the day, be sober.

FRAGMENT 103

It is written: No one knew the Son ... beholding as in a mirror, they are transformed into the same image.

FRAGMENT 104

From this one can see also the similar sayings ... the wisdom of God from such a teacher.

FRAGMENT 105

This seems to contradict what was said earlier. Above he says that there is no need to prepare, but here he says, "If I go, I will prepare a place for you." What he means is this: as far as the abundance of good things is concerned, which the Father prepared by his foreknowledge so that those who live well and with complete care may dwell continually in the good things prepared, there is no need for them to be made ready by me. What is needed is that you show the fitting disposition. Nevertheless, I become the one who prepares these things for you and secures them for you. For what is "I am coming again and will take you to myself"? He says, in effect: when I have given you the way up into the heavens and the opportunity to enjoy the same good things, so that the one who established the cause of these things is revealed to you, I myself will come again. (He means his second coming from heaven.) Then I will take you and go up into the heavens, where I myself am, so that you may be with me and enjoy the same things as I do. For as Paul says, "If we endure, we shall also reign with him."

FRAGMENT 106

Thomas seems to have had something exact and carefully tested about him. This is shown by what he says. I think he said it not because he distrusted those who claimed to have seen the Lord, but because he was on guard in case it was a phantom. He was remembering the words, "Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he.'" I think the other apostles felt the same, but Thomas most of all. That the other apostles also had a similar thought when they saw Jesus is clear from what is written: "They thought it was a phantom." He answered and said to them, "Touch me and see, for a spirit

does not have bones and flesh, as you see that I have.” As for how it is said to him, “Do not be unbelieving, but believing,” and as for the name Thomas, this could be said. Of those who would be counted worthy of a greater vision from the Savior, at his transfiguration on the mountain and of those seen in glory, Moses and Elijah, he changed the names. The names of the rest he did not change, because their own names were enough in themselves to show each one’s character. It is not our purpose now to speak of the other apostles. We speak of Thomas, whose name is translated “Didymus” (Twin). The reason is that he was a kind of twin in the word, setting down divine things in two ways. He was an imitator of Christ, who spoke to those outside in parables, but privately explained everything to his own disciples. It is not out of place to say that the true disciples of Christ succeed in this twofold preparation in speaking, and perhaps Thomas already had it then in an outstanding degree. One might also say that the translation of this name alone is recorded because the evangelist wanted Greeks who read the Gospel to notice the particular meaning of the name. It is the only name interpreted in this special way, so that they might find the reason why his name is also given in Greek.

FRAGMENT 110

It would have been more proper to say “is” of God the Word. But since he wanted to show the existence of the Word as distinct from the incarnation, which happened at a certain time, he put “was” in place of “is.” We must understand that the strict time-meanings of verbs should not be applied to eternal things. That is, “was,” “is,” and “will be” are not to be taken that way. For God the Word is the Son of the Father and is eternal God. The verbs used of him must not be taken as indicating time, since he himself is not under time. A verb, as Aristotle says, is that which indicates time besides its meaning.

FRAGMENT 111

He used fitting verbs: “became” for the flesh, and “was” for the deity. The phrase “through him” is used not to suggest service, but to show his working together with the Father. It also shows that nothing that exists is excluded from being made through him.

FRAGMENT 112

For the life-giving power in him is not only able to give life. It is also able to fill human souls with knowledge and to drive out ignorance. Paul was ignorant of Christ when he was persecuting him, but when he was lit up by the light of life he knew the one he was persecuting. And the robber, suffering on the cross, was enlightened and knew the life. For the Savior says, "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him."

FRAGMENT 113

The purpose of the one who sent him was that all should believe. If not all believed, and did not receive the illumination, [still no one could say that the light did not rise for this purpose]. For the prophets before John became witnesses of the light so that the Hebrews would believe through them. But John, who came after them, bears witness to the Savior's coming so that not only the Hebrews would believe but also all those from the nations. As the prophet says, "I will pour out from my Spirit on all flesh." And David says, "All the nations will serve him."

FRAGMENT 114

"Of bloods" means that they have their birth from material things. To Peter, for example, the Savior says, "Flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in the heavens." (And in another way:) Those are called sons of God who do not offer the sacrifices of the law "from bloods". That is, they do not please God through slaughter and the pouring out of blood. "From the will of the flesh" refers to those who do everything in order to appear righteous to men. These people are set forth as pleasing God "by the will of flesh". They circumcise the flesh and openly want to live as Jews, but they do not care for the heart or for the hidden Judaism. "From the will of a man" refers to those who, under the pretext of human philosophy, keep away from evil and take up virtue.

FRAGMENT 115

When he says "He has cried out," he means that he proclaimed the coming with boldness and freedom, and without any holding back. The "cry" is not a matter of how loudly he spoke, but of the intensity of his understanding. For the one who announces great teachings, as he should, in keeping with his understanding, speaks them out in a loud voice.

FRAGMENT 116

“Has come to be” must be taken to mean “will come to be.” For this is the habit of Scripture, as we have said. And “did not lay hold of [or: overcome]” must be taken to mean “will not lay hold of [or: overcome].”

FRAGMENT 117

John is a prophet and a lamp of the light, training beforehand and accustoming the eye of the soul of the one who wants to be enlightened. In the same way he is also “the voice of one crying.” The text calls the Word the one who cries, and John the voice. It is necessary for a voice to come before the word. The work of a voice is to make clear what is signified. He calls “wilderness” the soul that has been deprived of divine teaching. What, then, does the voice of the one who cries command to the deserted souls? “Make straight the way of the Lord,” so that it may be ready to receive him.

FRAGMENT 118

When John bore witness about the light, he knew that the light was also God the Word. And this Word is present to every rational being. The thinking [part] of us, which is also called the ruling faculty, is the most central part of us. For there is the inner word, by which we are rational. Christ oversees it as God and Word, he who was about to come to be baptized. “This one, whom you do not know, stands in the midst of you,” entering into the hearts and the kidneys of all.

FRAGMENT 119

All who were present saw, but not all believed. Some say that not everyone beheld the Spirit, but only John and those who were more reasonably disposed. For even if they saw with their physical eyes, it was not for that reason altogether plain to everyone. The prophets and Moses beheld many other things. At the transfiguration on the mountain, not all the disciples had the benefit of the sight. Nor did all share in the appearance after the resurrection. Much more, then, the Jews at the baptism did not all see.

FRAGMENT 120

It is not possible to see this with the senses, but only with a mind that looks at the angels approaching in order to serve Jesus, ascending and descending. The word “Amen” can be found sometimes single and sometimes doubled. The word is Hebrew, signifying [text missing]. For “Amen” is the same as

“truly” and [text missing]. Many Psalms that have at the end “Let it be, let it be” have “Amen, Amen” in the Hebrew. So it is likely that the Savior says, as a prayer, “Let it be, let it be,” that you be found faithful enough to see “the heaven opened,” and the rest of the promise. “Amen” is also equal to [text missing]. In Matthew, for example, Jesus says, “Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here.” In Luke it reads, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing there who will not taste death.” That is, “Amen” is equal to [text missing] and to [text missing], as in “Truly I say to you” that this will happen.

FRAGMENT 121

The whip made of rope by Jesus stood for the sins of the lawbreakers. By these sins they were driven out, beaten by Jesus. Scripture names sins “rope” in many places: “Ropes of sinners have wound around me, and their hands weave injustice together.” And in Proverbs: “Each one is bound tight by the cords of his own sins,” that is, he is punished. So they were whipped by Jesus and driven out of the temple with the rope they had plaited themselves. The just judge could not weave the punishment against the ungodly from anywhere else. He could only bring it from the very things by which they themselves had sinned and acted lawlessly.

FRAGMENT 121A

It must be said that water differs from the Spirit only in concept, not in substance. The Savior says, “He who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from his belly.” He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive. If this was said of the Spirit as water flowing out like rivers, then the water will differ from the Spirit only in concept. So, just as someone is begotten from the Savior (wise from wisdom, true from truth, and life from life, since the source and begetting of all is one), so also from the Holy Spirit one is begotten holy and spiritual. He is cleansed by the water, and watered so that he bears fruit. In this way he is born of water and Spirit.

FRAGMENT 122

Matthew spoke of the place which is ruled, in which these people receive their inheritance. John and Luke named it from God who rules. Even in our ordinary usage a kingdom is sometimes indicated by the one who rules, and

sometimes by the place. So we say, “the kingdom of the Romans,” and “the king of Egypt.”

FRAGMENT 123

The Spirit visits only those who are earnest and have faith and virtue. From the worthless, who have made themselves strangers to him, he stays far away. “Far” and “near” should not be understood in terms of place. They refer to the vessels [that have been cleansed] to receive his illuminations, or have not been. The words “Where it wills it blows” show that the Spirit is a substance. Some suppose that he is an activity of God, without a subsistence of his own. That is why the apostle, after listing the gifts of the Spirit, added, “But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one as he wills.” There is also the saying in Acts, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” And again: “As they were fasting,” it says, “and ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.” And the prophet Agabus says, “The Holy Spirit says this: They will bind the man whose belt this is,” and so on.

FRAGMENT 124

This seems to be true of people who are neither exceedingly wicked nor perfect in virtue. Because they are deceived in both directions, one can see from their doing the works of darkness that they love the darkness. Human beings have free will, and ought to welcome the light; but they do the opposite and welcome the darkness, while fleeing the light. The statement that they loved the darkness more than the light should not be taken as a comparison. They did not love the light at all, since they hated it, because their understanding of it is correct. Those who do wicked things hate the light, and if they hate the light, they do not love the darkness merely in comparison. The apostle’s saying about wicked people is similar: that they are “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” And in the Psalms: “The worthless man has loved evil more than goodness, and injustice more than speaking righteousness.”

FRAGMENT 125

The bride is the human soul. Of itself it is not able to bring forth any good thing. But since it is by nature receptive from another, in the manner of a woman, it brings forth the virtues, both practical and intellectual. The bridegroom, the one who sows these good things in her, is none other than Christ Jesus, to whom I bear witness and whom I baptize. The friend is the

one who stands beside him with firm agreement and steady faith in him. For none of those who are with Jesus himself is shaken. So also Moses, living in virtue, heard God say, "But you yourself stand with me." For God does not stand with us; rather we stand with him, as he offers us from himself an immovable standing.

FRAGMENT 126

Whoever does not have a heavenly mind but is earthly is called "made of dust," and is said to bear the image of the one made of dust. So even if he ever claims to have wisdom, it is earthly, soulish, and demonic, as the apostle James says.

FRAGMENT 127

On John 3:35. Again we hear "loves" in a rather human sense. But there is a natural law: one kind of love goes toward what is begotten, and another goes toward what is loved in a different way. If God loves righteousness, he loves it as God, as in the words, "I am God, who loves righteousness and hates robbery that comes from injustice." He does not love it as a man does, in order to have it in himself and to do something in keeping with it. The Father also loves the Son as truth, wisdom and holiness, as David says, "For behold, you have loved truth." He loves the Son as Father, not as God. But he loves the world as God and as its Creator, not as Father.

FRAGMENT 128

On John 4:10. It is also possible to speak allegorically. Jacob's well is the teaching of Moses given through the law. His sons and his flocks drank from it: the twelve patriarchs and the peoples born from them. Those who drink from this spring thirst again. That is, as time goes on they thirst, and they come to the teaching of the gospel, which saves and which has no successor. "For heaven and earth will pass away," as the Savior says, "but my words will never pass away."

FRAGMENT 129

On John 5:13. For even the mere sight of the one who is envied knows how to throw no small spark among those who begrudge him.

FRAGMENT 130

On John 6:51. For this reason he would have mixed with us . . . and with those [who are] becoming [companions] of the demons.

FRAGMENT 131

On John 9:8. He was a beggar because he lacked the necessities of life and was weak. Such people you could also find among Greeks and barbarians, begging for the benefit and provision of Christ's truth and for knowledge of his rich insights. Jesus freed this man not only from blindness but also from begging. For along with sight he gave him whatever was necessary for the salvation of his soul. Here blindness is the cause of begging; in the Acts it is lameness.

FRAGMENT 132

On John 9:16. If the one who does not keep the sabbath is not from God, then neither are your priests, who profane the sabbath by circumcision, from God.

FRAGMENT 133

On John 9:21. By making him a credible witness, they [thus set him forward, so that they themselves might be shown to have been mistaken]. When Christ opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not open those of a small child but of one of full age, so that he could both see and, as a man, speak in his own defense. The other blind people who received their sight were of the same kind.

FRAGMENT 134

On John 9:27. "You did not hear" stands for "You were unwilling to accept what was said." And "Why do you want to hear again?" amounts to this: "If you do not accept what has been said, why do you want it reported to you again, to no purpose?"

FRAGMENT 135

On John 9:31. If God does not hear sinners, how did Christ teach sinners to pray, saying, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive our debtors"? God hears those who are inclining toward repentance, even if they have not yet stopped sinning. And if God did not hear sinners, he would not have eaten and drunk with tax collectors and prostitutes. Or else it is the case that God does not hear the person who prays that God would accomplish works like the works of Jesus [if that person is a sinner].

FRAGMENT 136

On John 10:31. If they had picked up stones before, they picked them up again. And I think that whoever speaks evil of someone is throwing stones at him. They spoke evil of him, and a division arose among the Jews because of him. So once again these people, having carried the weight of their slanderous words, threw stones at him, real stones. That is why Wisdom says, "The one who throws a stone up high throws it on his own head." And the psalmist says, "His injustice will come down on his own head." The unjust man who speaks against the heights is throwing at the heights.

FRAGMENT 137

On John 11:9. Just as the day is divided into twelve hours, so the twelve patriarchs and the company of the apostles match the hours of the day in number. They have Christ, our God, as their sun. He is also the day that the mind perceives, and from him come the words and the illumination of the knowledge of them.

FRAGMENT 138

And again they were seeking to kill him, as has often been said. Now they had confirmed their decision and [were treating it as a deed already done]. Again he saves himself in a human way, and he does this continually. The reason he gave was that his hour had not yet come. So now he stays in the wilderness, in a city called Ephraim. He remained there with his disciples, waiting for the right moment and sparing them from destruction.

FRAGMENT 139

The one who follows him serves him, and in this way is his servant. For this reason, wherever the Word is, there too is that person. The promise must not be understood in a bodily or local sense. Yet if someone does take it to mean a place, he would not be wrong. For in the resurrection, those who excel in brightness receive, each according to his worth, places in the purest regions of the upper air, clearer than the fineness of light itself. These are the places best suited for leisure to contemplate the truths of God the Word.

FRAGMENT 140

"That..." The word "one" is used in many ways: by likeness and in many other ways. It is used of agreement, when Scripture says, "the multitude of those who believed had one heart and one soul." It is used of likeness, as when it

says, “For we were all baptized in one Spirit into one body.” This is by likeness of nature. We have Adam as our beginning and head by the natural origin of our birth, and so we are all said to have one body. In the same way we also give Christ the title of head, through the divine new birth. That new birth became for us a pattern of his death and resurrection, since he rose as firstborn from the dead. We give him the title of head as a foreshadowing of his resurrection. “Of him we are members in part, and body,” being born again through the Spirit into incorruption.

Fragments on the Gospel of Luke

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 233–250

Origen's Homilies on Luke survive in Jerome's Latin translation, but these Greek fragments come from the catena tradition and give Origen's comments on the third Gospel in his own language. As with any catena, a fragment may be shortened or reworded by the compiler.

FRAGMENT 1

"And standing over her, he rebuked the fever." The Savior comes to Simon's house and finds his mother-in-law burning with fever. "He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left." Perhaps, then, in the words "the fever left her," as Matthew and Mark report them, and in their whole account, nothing suggests a living creature that produces the fever. But in Luke's words, "standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left," I do not know whether we will be forced to say that what is rebuked and leaves is a living thing, one that cannot withstand the working of the one who rebukes it. For it is not reasonable to say that something lifeless, with no power of perception, is rebuked. It is not strange that there are certain powers that harm the human body. Nor should we always accuse the soul of those who suffer, as if it were harmed by these things. The devil struck Job with a wicked sore because he had received authority to test him through the body. But Job is not to be accused on that account, since he contended and bore the blow nobly. Only let this be said, if ever we are tried by bodily pains: "but [do not touch] his soul." In the same way the Lord, by rebuking, heals those who are sick. ["Rebuked"] is put here in place of "commanded."

FRAGMENT 2

"And as the sun was setting." They brought these people near sunset rather than in the daytime. Perhaps they were ashamed, or afraid of the Pharisees, or occupied with other things. Or perhaps they thought it was not lawful to

heal on the sabbath, for the evangelist noted that “he was teaching them on the sabbath.” For this reason their relatives brought the sick at the setting of the sun, and he healed them.

FRAGMENT 3

“He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.” Why was he standing by the lake, when according to Matthew and Mark “he was walking by the sea of Galilee”? The evangelists seem to say opposite things. But anyone who tries to answer from Scripture can say this about the passage. At the beginning of the making of the world, God called the gatherings of [waters] “seas.” Rivers too are gatherings of waters, and so these also are seas. So too the very sweet and most drinkable “lake of Gennesaret,” now called “Tiberias” in the Gospels, is a sea, especially since it too is a gathering of waters. Gennesaret is a region in the portion of the Canaanite. As the Lord went along the shore there, he found Peter and John and those with them, and called them again after the catch of fish. They had earlier been disciples of John the Baptist.

FRAGMENT 4

“Behold, a man full of leprosy.” In the literal account, after the sending away of the little bird, the one who was cleansed first “washes his clothes.” Then he “shaves off every hair” and bathes in water, and after this it is added, “and he will be clean.” The “clothes” are a way of life not altogether badly woven, since even if he put [it] off [...]. The “hairs” are the things that have sprouted up dead in the soul. Opposed to these are the hairs of [...] and of the Nazirites and of the disciples. For of the Nazirites it is said, “iron shall not come up on the head.” This means all they do prospers, so that not even a leaf falls from them as they bear fruit. Already he puts the defilement away from the body with water, which shows baptism. After this he becomes fit for the camp, but he does not go into his own house until [seven] days have passed. And as to the head being shaved [...], this is because of the more central points of doctrine. The putting away of the beard stands for the man’s sins. By the eyebrows he showed [...]

FRAGMENT 5

“He ordered him to tell no one.” The covering of the mouth shows that a man must condemn himself to silence until he has returned and cleansed himself. It is not out of place to apply this text to those who are guilty of sins and yet have set themselves to teach about divine things.

FRAGMENT 6

“Bring for your cleansing.” If you like, take the “living flesh” to mean reason, the Word. When reason is not present in the soul, whatever happens, the one who sins is not to blame, since he is in the condition of a creature without reason. But if reason is present, he is accountable. Why, then, does the disease spreading over the whole body perhaps indicate, figuratively, frenzies or fits of melancholy, or the condition of infancy? For when reason gives no help and sense perception is not present, nothing done or said is sin. It is sin only when perception is present. We should also put it this way: we please God in two ways. If we live to God, let nothing in us be dead. If we have died to sin, let nothing of sin be alive in us. For while we live in him, let us refuse the deadness that comes from sin. Having died to the world, let us not run back to the passions. We die to sin by putting to death “the members that are on the earth.” “We died to sin; how shall we still live in it?” So defilement, even if it is slight, is also unclean according to the law, just as it is clean to be dead to sin altogether. For, he says, “a little [leaven] leavens the whole.” Some have called “unclean” the deadness that comes from a wicked disposition, such as licentiousness or injustice. They call “clean” what makes no [distinction] about anything bodily, provided it does not arise from wickedness. A foreign [marriage] is not unclean unless it comes from licentiousness. Food is not unclean unless it comes from lack of self-control. Work on the Sabbath is not unclean unless it is done for gain. According to some, [again], the law declares clean the man who is leprous all over. This shows that God hates what is mixed and variegated. As the law goes on it shows this more clearly: “You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, and a garment woven from two materials is counterfeit; and you shall not breed your cattle with a different kind.” Everywhere it prefers simplicity, which can be seen in the man who is leprous all over.

FRAGMENT 7

“And after these things he went out and saw a tax collector.” “He went out,” it says, “and saw a tax collector called Levi.” This is Matthew the evangelist. Mark and Luke hide his name under his earlier title. Matthew, however, makes his own name plain, saying, “He saw Matthew the tax collector.” He says these things so that we, marveling at the skill of God who healed him, may believe in him with the greatest certainty.

FRAGMENT 8

“Blessed are those who weep now, for you will laugh.” He promises the laughter that comes from joy and cheerfulness. So it says in Job, “He will fill a true mouth with laughter.” Perhaps for this reason one of the patriarchs is called “Laughter,” the name signifying divine cheerfulness.

FRAGMENT 9

“For there is no good tree that produces rotten fruit.” The “good tree” is the Holy Spirit. The “bad tree” is the devil and his servants. So the person who has the Holy Spirit displays the Spirit’s fruits, which the apostle lists when he says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” But the person who has the opposing power bears “the passions of dishonor,” “thorns and thistles.”

FRAGMENT 10

“And behold, a woman who was a sinner in the city.” The more perfect soul has served the Word of God well. It has boldness to come to the very head. “The head of Christ is God.” So it can pour ointment on that head and surround the glory of God with fragrance. For God is glorified through the fragrance of the lives of the righteous. The less perfect woman, the less perfect soul, busies herself about the feet and the lowlier things, and we are close to her. [The text here is corrupt: it seems to say that we do not even reach the feet because of our sins.] Where are our tears? Where is our weeping, so that we might at least be able to come to the feet of Jesus? For we cannot yet reach the head itself. It is a welcome thing, after sins, to bring the fragrance of repentance, so that someone may be able to be the second woman, the one who anoints the feet and not the head. That is, she does not touch the more perfect and higher things, but the outermost and last.

FRAGMENT 11

11a Luke 8:16: “No one who lights a lamp covers it with a vessel.” This is not said about a lamp you can see and touch, but about a lamp of the mind. No one who lit a physical lamp would cover it with a vessel or put it under a bed; he would put it on its lampstand. The “vessels” of the house could be the powers of the soul, and the “bed” the body. Those who come in are the hearers of the one who shares the word with them. The lampstand is the ruling part of the soul, since it is the place of speech, or rather the mouth, when someone opens it with the word of God. In either case, those who make their

way in to God will see the light, and the light is the knowledge with which he has lit up himself. Someone who wants to apply the lamp to the most perfect of Jesus' disciples will shame us with what was said about John, that "he was the lamp that burns" and shines. The lamp also stands for the mind in each person. Yet the saying, "Let your lamps be burning," was spoken to all the disciples of Jesus. So a person must not hide the lamp that has been lit in a reasoning soul. He must set it on the lampstand, of which Moses' lampstand, which he "placed in the tent of testimony," was a symbol. Let fellow servants be measured out their grain by the "faithful and wise servant" with a measure, but let everyone see the rays of the lamp that sits on the lampstand, that is, on the church.

11b Nor do people put the lamp "under the bed," where someone lies down to rest, nor "under" any other "vessel." Whoever does that has no thought for those who come into the house, for whom the lamp has to be set. Those who kindle the mind within them with the "true light," with the shining word, and with the rays of wisdom, have a mind with the nature the Creator gave it. Such a mind needs a lamp, that is, to be kindled from the Word, from wisdom, and from the truth of the true light. We should hold that the command "Let your lamps be burning" is fulfilled by those who take care to keep in the soul a mind of sharp sight, one that shares in the One who said, "I have come as a light into the world." For those who burn the lamp and set it on the lampstand to shine for everyone in the house will also urge those in the house, as they see the brightness of the lamp, to light their own lampstand too.

FRAGMENT 12

Perhaps the Lord calls himself the "lamp." By becoming part of the divine plan of salvation he shines on everyone in the house. He is light by his very being, and like a lamp he is held, without being limited, in the clay vessel of the flesh, with the soul in the middle like a wick through which the fire burns. He names the holy church the "lampstand." On it the Word of God shines through the preaching and floods with the rays of truth all who live in this world as in a house, filling everyone's mind with divine knowledge. He has used the "measuring bowl" as a symbol of the synagogue of the Jews and the bodily worship of the law, the symbols of old in the letter. This worship has no knowledge at all of the light of true understanding in the mind. The

Word does not want to be held down under that measure. He wants to be set on high, on the greatness of the church's beauty.

FRAGMENT 13

Anyone held by the letter of the law, as under a measuring bowl, would have been deprived of everlasting light. He would give no spiritual understanding to those who hurry to strip off the senses as deceptive. "But he is put on the lampstand." He means the church, that is, the reasoning worship in the Spirit, so that he may give light to all and teach those in the whole world to live and conduct themselves by the Word alone. So let us not light the divine lamp, the Word who gives light, through contemplation and action, and then put it under the measure. Otherwise we will be condemned for confining by the letter the boundless power of wisdom. Rather, I say, let us put it "on the lampstand," the holy church, on the height of true contemplation, which sets the light of the divine teachings blazing for all. [But these things were also discussed in Matthew, so it is unnecessary to go on at length here.]

FRAGMENT 14

8:39 "Return to your house." He sends him to his own house. [The Greek here is damaged. It seems to say: for he did not have so great a measure of power.] There may be some who become hearers and disciples of such a man. Those who cannot take in the presence of Jesus any more fully he cared for no less than the one who could, since [that man] proclaims from the few things he has received. You could also apply the account to the nature of the man outside Israel. For his sake Jesus sails across to the country of the Gergesenes, and to meet him Jesus comes out onto the land. "He did not put on a garment," it says. The man had not put on what covers his shame. "And he did not stay in a house," for he was not, like Jacob, "a plain man living in a house." So Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your [house]." "And he lived in the tombs," not among the living but among the dead. "Now there was," it says, "a herd of many pigs feeding on the mountain." But perhaps pigs do not feed on a mountain. How then did "the herd rush down the cliff"? Perhaps, then, those who love pleasure, friends of the belly and of what lies below the belly, feed where the tombs are, near the legion of demons. In his goodness Jesus destroys the life of the pigs in the water. Through the demons he cuts off the breath of those wicked lovers of pleasure and of the body. Perhaps such a man even becomes self-controlled. If anyone

is self-controlled, he is with Jesus. But the one who is only beginning to be self-controlled is “at his feet.”

FRAGMENT 15

15a 8:41 “And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus.” Such is the history of the miracle. But perhaps we should also look at it more closely and at a higher level. Let the simpler and more guileless people marvel at these great works of God, for they build up faith even when understood in a bodily way. But there are those who can cross over to seeing that these things happened to those people as types, and that they were written for [our sake; the text is incomplete here]. Let us pray to God and ask that a word come to make these things clear as well. How was it that Jesus was going first of all to the daughter of the synagogue ruler, and not to the woman with the flow of blood who met him on the road? And how was it that, though he was going first of all to the girl, this woman was healed first? For the Son of God came first of all to the daughter of the synagogue ruler, the synagogue of the Jews, and found her sick and dead. The transgressions of Israel made her die. But the woman with the flow of blood, the one on the road, full of uncleanness, flowing “not at the time of her monthly separation” but bleeding always and sick with the blood-red sin, is the church from the nations. She believes in the Son of God before that other one does. He goes off to the girl, but the woman follows him and wants to touch at least “the fringe of his garment.” Luke added something Matthew did not say: that the synagogue ruler’s daughter was twelve years old, and that the woman had been bleeding for twelve years. So she began to bleed at the same time that the girl was born.

15b For the girl is in unbelief for as long as the synagogue lives. The same limit of time marks the end of that one and the beginning of this woman’s salvation. The girl dies at twelve years. And after twelve years of suffering, this woman believes and is healed, she who “could not be healed by” the physicians. For many physicians promised to heal those from the nations. If you see those who practice philosophy and profess to teach truth, they are physicians trying to heal. But she spent everything she had, and “she could not be healed by any” of the physicians. Then she touched the fringe of Jesus, the only physician of souls and bodies, and through her fiery, burning faith she was healed at once. If we look at our faith in Christ Jesus and understand how great the Son of God is, and whom we have touched, we will see that, compared with the fringes that are in him, we have touched only a fringe.

Even so, the fringe heals us and makes us hear from Jesus, “Daughter, your faith has saved you.” And if we are healed, the daughter of the synagogue ruler will also rise. For, he says, “When the fullness of the nations has come in, then all Israel will be saved.”

FRAGMENT 16

8:45 “And Jesus said, ‘Who touched me?’” The disciples pressed against him and handled him. But the woman with the flow of blood did not touch him, for she did not dare. Out of reverence she touched only the fringe.

FRAGMENT 17

“She reported before all the people how she was healed.” Before this she did not dare, out of reverence, to meet him face to face and ask for healing. But now that she is sought out, she comes forward as she should, fearful and reverent, and showing the respect that fits the moment. She makes her confession of healing plain to everyone. She does not make it for the one who knows all things, but for those who did not know. “She knew in her body that she was healed of the scourge.” For the bleeding was a scourge. In the same way you may say that other bodily sufferings are scourges of God, since through them he scourges those who are worthy of his discipline: “He scourges every son whom he receives.” So he also said to the paralytic, whom he likewise released from a scourge, “See, you have become well; sin no more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” Here too the healing the woman received through touching, the Savior confirmed by his word when he said, “Go in peace, and be well of your scourge.” And may she be made well first in her soul by faith, and then in her body also.

FRAGMENT 18

“He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God.” Was it, then, before this, when he sent out the twelve to proclaim, that he forbade them to confess that he was the Christ? One may say that he wanted first to instruct, in a rather dim way, those who would hear the name of Christ from the apostles. Then he wanted to let it be, so to speak, digested in the minds of those who heard. So there would be silence about proclaiming such a thing concerning him, and at a more fitting time Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, would be built up in those who had been instructed beforehand. In the beginning not even the apostles themselves knew these things. So it says: “From that time Jesus began to show them that he must suffer many

things,” and die and rise again. If he had been proclaimed in this way earlier, the things about him would not have been made clear. So for now he commands them to be silent about him. He is keeping the more complete teaching about him for a more suitable time, when the disciples who had seen him risen could bear witness, to those who had seen him crucified, of his resurrection from the dead.

FRAGMENT 19

“To proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” There is a sin of the soul that is death, which John calls “a sin leading to death.” There is a sin of the soul that is sickness. And there is a sin of the soul that is loss, as the word “having suffered loss” is used here, and in the apostle: “If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss.” [Origen said this but did not add the distinction between them.]

FRAGMENT 20

“It happened, after these words, about eight days later.” Matthew says “six,” counting neither the day on which the words were spoken nor the day on which he was transfigured, but only the six days in between. Luke, however, joined them on as whole days.

FRAGMENT 21

Let us ask how Luke says, “It happened after these words, about eight days,” while Mark says, “after about six days.” As far as the wording “about eight days later” goes, Luke counts this day as well, the one on which it happens, while Mark counts only the days in between. So there is no disagreement as to the wording. But carrying the argument to a higher level, I would say that it was not for nothing that the Savior did what he had promised, not at once but after six days. The six days are a symbol of the making of the world, that is, they mean after this world. For then Jesus takes up into the high mountain whoever is a Peter or a James or a John. No one else goes up except the three, so that he may see the transfiguration of Jesus, and Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory.

FRAGMENT 22

“He took Peter, John and James and went up.” The transfiguration on the mountain was shown to the disciples as a preview of the glory the Savior would have in the future. It was shown in bodily form, so that it could fall within the sight of their mortal eyes, even though they could not bear the

excess of its brightness, [a brightness] so unmixed and unbearable to our eyes. The glory that belongs to the divine being is unseen and unapproachable by every created nature. The disciples proved this: they could not even endure this bodily appearance shown to them on the mountain, but fell to the ground. A person sees the Word transfigured in glory when he goes up with him, is lifted up with him, and sees him as the very Word himself and as high priest, conversing and praying to the Father. But since he had not yet brought his body completely to an incorruption that could not be changed, he was seen shining along with his perishable garments. For when the righteous rise in glory at Christ's second coming, they will not have perceptible garments, but certain radiant robes will be put around them. Just as the appearance of those garments was not different from that of the transfiguration, so in the resurrection the appearance of the saints will be far more glorious than what they had in this life, though not a different one. Those with Jesus were seen in glory by the disciples: Moses, showing the face of the law, and Elijah, that of the prophets; for he himself was the Lord of the law and the prophets. So the person who has understood the spiritual law, and the wisdom "hidden in a mystery" in the prophets, sees Moses and Elijah in glory.

FRAGMENT 23

"And behold, two men were talking with him." They converse with one another, that is, they speak in agreement with each other. He joined those of the old covenant to the apostles, showing that at Christ's second coming all the righteous will be joined together.

FRAGMENT 24

"Master, it is good for us to be here." Peter had heard that Christ was going to suffer, and he thought he had found an opportunity to say what he did not want to happen. So he asked the Lord to stay up on the mountain permanently, so that the Jews would not find him when he came down and kill him. He did not know that all good things were going to come from the suffering and the resurrection. "While he was saying these things, a cloud overshadowed them." The cloud cut short his meddling, his seeking something beyond his own capacity. By this it also gave an advance picture that all the saints, those before his coming and those after it, will be together. It also showed that law, prophets and gospel lead into the same tents. They are

counted as three, but look toward one end. And it showed that in the resurrection the saints will be “caught up in clouds to meet the Lord, and to be with him” forever.

FRAGMENT 25

“And they themselves kept silent and told no one.” Jesus did not want the things of his glory to be told before the glory that comes after his suffering. The hearers would have been harmed, especially the crowds, seeing someone so glorified being crucified. So the disciples did not hide it out of envy, but out of fear that they would not be believed. Luke says, “And they themselves kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.” When, then, did they tell? After the ascension, after the coming of the Spirit. For then they were filled with boldness and counted worthy of the Spirit. They had the voice of the signs speaking in their defense, and from then on everything they said was readily accepted.

FRAGMENT 26

26a “But they did not understand this saying.” What he means is this: even if you do not understand these words now, you will understand them in due time, once you have put away your ignorance. That will be when you turn to me completely and the veil is taken away. I will remove it from you in the Passion itself, and the sign of this you will see in the curtain of the temple torn in two. Perhaps, too, it holds generally for those who are learning that the words of what is handed on must at first be not understood, and the sayings must be veiled. Then later, after the hearers have laid the words up in their ears, the meaning is made clear, as the words are carried over from the ears to the heart. Notice, then, that he spoke to the disciples themselves at first in parables, which they heard along with those outside, and afterward, “privately,” he “explained everything” to them. In the same way we, when we have pondered the words and at first understood nothing, begin as it were to see again through constant study. The Word shines little by little “in our hearts” “to give the light of the knowledge of his glory.” The phrase “is about to be handed over,” in Matthew and Luke, plainly raises the question: by whom? So, as we said, one person will answer, “By Judas,” and another, “By the people.” But since Judas and the people were human beings, we should stop and ask whether it is better to follow Paul, who says of the Fath-

er, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.” There the words “by God” are left unstated.

^{26b} When you come to this point, you will ask whether the word “handed over” means the same thing when it is applied to Judas as when it is applied to God. Someone who says it means the same will put the difference in the purpose. Judas handed him over for silver, with a plot against him, whereas the Father handed him over to do us good. Look further at how it is said: “so that they would not perceive it.” Just as there is such a thing as failing to perceive in the senses, which often happens to perceptible things because of some passion, so also with the ruling faculty of the mind it is possible to be without perception of a word or saying, or to perceive it only with difficulty. And since “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of perception,” perhaps the fear the disciples felt was bad. It arose from their ignorance of the saying, and the veil was hindering them from learning by asking. For the one who arranged their ignorance and veiled the saying from them could see that if the Savior were questioned and answered, the ignorance and the veil would be taken away. At the same time, compare this: with the parables the disciples “asked him privately” and “were not afraid to ask.” Now they “were afraid to ask him about this saying.” The one who produced the ignorance and the veiling in them was arranging something. He was keeping the removal of the ignorance and of the veil for a suitable time, for he was “about to be handed over into the hands of men.”

FRAGMENT 27

“But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” So if you are ready, my friend, you will choose, because of my teaching, to live unsettled here, as I do, with nowhere to lay my head, in hope of the kingdom of heaven. You will not look for rest here, but in the age to come. For my disciples, who practice righteousness, “will have tribulation in the world.” But the “evil men and impostors” are compared in this life to foxes and birds of the air, and “will advance, deceiving and being deceived.” The words Paul spoke, in whom Christ was speaking, fit especially well with “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”: “we are homeless.”

FRAGMENT 28

What he is saying is this: unless you rid yourself of the birds and beasts, that is, the demons, I cannot lodge in you. And being such as you are, you cannot receive the dignity of an apostle.

FRAGMENT 29

“Let the dead bury their own dead.” There is also a higher sense. When the young man’s father was dead, then the Savior called him. I think that, just as the world had been crucified to Paul and was dead to him, because the affairs of the world had died for him and he no longer regarded them as “things seen” and “temporary,” so for each righteous person the devil has died, who lived for him while he sinned. For everyone “who commits sin has been born of the devil,” and for everyone who sins and fixes his attention on things here, the evil father lives. To everyone for whom the evil one has died, the Savior may say, “Follow me.” Perhaps, understood mystically, this also means that we must hate our father if we are to be worthy of Jesus. The words “bury their own dead” are to be taken only as allegory. For the dead in a way bury “their own dead” within themselves, becoming their tombs and monuments. But the one who obeys Jesus leaves the dead completely behind and never touches it again, for he knows that whoever touches a dead body is defiled.

FRAGMENT 30

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back.” Each of us is his own plowman, and our own soul is the land. We must break it up as fallow ground with the plow of reason, after yoking the oxen, the workers, from the pure Scriptures. For then a person will make new the soul that has grown old through long idleness in time past, which has produced much wickedness and fruitless works. He will cut out [the old growth] with the plow of the word and make the ground fresh. Then he will sow seeds from the divine teaching: seeds of the law, of the prophets, and of the gospel, remembering it and meditating on it. This is why the God of all also says through Jeremiah the prophet: “Break up fresh ground for yourselves, and do not sow among thorns.” For it is not [possible] simply to receive the seed and bear fruit without first cleansing our souls and casting out every passion, and the cares and pleasures of this life, which are the thorns. Therefore he says: “Turn away from evil and do good.”

FRAGMENT 31

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others.” That is what Luke says about the seventy. Mark says that “he called the twelve and sent them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits.” This sending “two by two” to serve the word seems to be in keeping with God’s purpose, and it is ancient, going back to Moses and Aaron when the people came out of the land of Egypt. God brought Israel out by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Then Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, both of one mind, quieted the people when they were stirred up by the ten. Eldad and Modad also prophesied in the tent, both in agreement. Later he sent Paul and Barnabas out to the nations, and such men were an example of the “two on earth” who agree. You may also apply to these the words “a brother helped by a brother is like a fortified city,” and “two are better than one.” Matthew shows in his list that the twelve also were arranged in pairs, for he ordered them by couples.

FRAGMENT 32

“Say to them: the kingdom of God has come near to you.” Just as you do good to bodies, so by teaching save souls. Here he calls himself the kingdom of God, as King and God. “It has come near,” he says, and he will soon visit you. Become worthy, and prepare yourselves to receive him. I think the difference between a house and a city is also stated in the Psalms, in the words: “Unless the Lord builds the house, and unless the Lord guards the city, the one who keeps watch has stayed awake in vain.” Notice there that what is still being built is called a “house,” while what is already worthy of guarding and garrisoning is called a “city.” It is for the greater house, the city, that he set the words “they receive you.”

FRAGMENT 33

“The dust that clung to our feet from your city we wipe off against you.” This means: “Say that the dust of your sins may come back upon you.” Notice that the cities that do not receive apostles and sound teaching have broad streets, in keeping with the words: “Wide is the gate and spacious the road that leads [to destruction], and many are those who go through it.” You should also know that a city that does not [receive] the apostles is filled with stirred-up earth, which makes the air murky and choking. But a city that receives them

either has no dust at all from the beginning, or, if it has some in certain sins, it lays the dust aside, being cleansed by the apostles.

FRAGMENT 34

"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." He wants to reveal as the Word, not without reason; as Wisdom, wisely; as Righteousness, justly. He knows, according to what each one deserves, the right times for revealing and the measures of the revelation. He reveals by taking away the veil lying on the heart and the "darkness" which he made "his hiding place." For in this way a person will be able, like Moses, "to enter into the thick darkness where God was." The heterodox think they can establish their impious doctrine from this passage, namely that the Father of Jesus Christ was unknown to those under the old covenant. We must answer them that "to whom the Son wishes" does not refer only to the future, from the time the Savior said these things to us. It refers to the past as well. For the word "to reveal" is of indefinite time, and it can refer to something in the past. We must also use against them the Scripture that says: "Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." Those who heard this said, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?" The Savior answers, "Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So the one who said this showed himself to Abraham at that time, so that Abraham might then see his day. But if they refuse to accept the word "reveal" as referring to the past, we must say this to them as well: "to know" is not the same as "to believe." For "to one is given through the Spirit a word of knowledge, to another faith in the same Spirit." So even by their own reckoning there could be people who believe but do not also know. Let it be granted, then, according to them, that Abraham did not know the Father but only believed. For the one who knows him as God does not [necessarily] know him as Father. Many people, at any rate, have a notion of God as Creator, yet they do not confess him as the Father of a Son.

FRAGMENT 35

For the awareness of a present lack becomes the preparation for the fullness that follows. But the one who does not perceive that he lacks what is truly good, because what seems good to him is already there, is naturally left lacking the true good. This, then, is the good pleasure of the Father that Christ makes known. God had spoken of it long ago through the prophet: "On

whom will I look, if not on the gentle and quiet one, who trembles at my words continually?" So God did not honor foolishness above wisdom. He preferred humility to pride, and he naturally left behind the one who, through his own insensibility, had shut off the benefit from himself. So the humble and childlike person says: "Teach me yourself the truth that concerns you. For I cannot learn it from a human being unless I learn it from you. Who ought to teach about God, if not God?" Revelation, then, comes from above, after a purpose that is fitting.

FRAGMENT 36

"All things have been handed over to me by my Father." Close to this is the saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." And the reason "all authority" is given to him is that he might "make peace through his cross, whether things on earth or things in the heavens." He has not yet made peace with all things. This is clear from the fact that there is still war that comes from evil. But complete peace will certainly come. It is most just that the Father has handed "all things" over to him, since the Son himself was handed over "for all." He "is the Savior of all people, especially of believers"; [he is the propitiation] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. He was handed over insofar as he became man, "so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen."

FRAGMENT 37

^{37a} "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see." Why are the eyes of Jesus' disciples blessed? Because "many prophets wished to see" what these saw, "and did not see it," and to hear what they heard, "and did not hear it." As for the words "to see," simpler people suppose it means this: many prophets, as they prophesied about me, wished to be born in my times, so that they might "see what you see and hear what you hear." But they were not fortunate enough to reach these times, in which you have been counted worthy of these things. But what is the reason that many prophets desired these things, and not all of them? Perhaps, as we have already explained about Abraham, who "saw the day of Christ and rejoiced," something similar happened with other prophets and righteous men. They were not many but few, and they had reached the vision and understanding which Jesus' disciples heard. Because these few

had already seen what the apostles saw and heard what the disciples of Jesus heard, they did not desire it; they possessed it “as though not possessing it.” But others became prophets and righteous men who fell short of the vision and understanding found in the apostles, and these did not obtain what they desired.

^{37b} So now eyes are called blessed, and I think the other members of the saints are too, so that there is some reason behind the saying, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you nursed.” And how could the “feet” not be blessed, those that have not stumbled or been shaken, but are “beautiful” among those who bring good news? Blessed also are the hands whose lifting up is “an evening sacrifice,” and whose lifting up is victory for Israel and defeat for Amalek. Blessed is the belly from which “rivers flow of water springing up to eternal life.” Blessed are the knees that “are bent in the name of Jesus.” Blessed also is the tongue that “confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Blessed too is the “mouth” that serves the word of God, and the nose, for which it is said, “After you, to the fragrance of your perfumes, we will run.” [These things were said by Origen. If anyone thinks them excellent, let him think so; they do not please me, since they are open to objection.]

FRAGMENT 38

“He himself entered a certain village.” The Savior lodged with holy women in a certain village. Luke passes over its name in silence, but John makes it clear by saying it was Bethany.

FRAGMENT 39

It would be reasonable to take Martha as standing for action and Mary for contemplation. For the mystery of love is included along with the practical life, unless someone, besides contemplating, chooses also to teach and to urge others toward action. For neither action nor contemplation exists without the other. Better, then, to say that Martha received the Word in a more bodily way, in her own house, which is the soul. Mary, however, listened to him spiritually, even while sitting at his feet. In this way, the things handed on at the beginning, by way of dispensation, are taken away by the one who [puts away] “the things of the child,” but the things that are perfect are not taken away. Martha may also be the synagogue from the circumcision, which received Jesus within its own borders and was distracted by

the great amount of service required by the letter of the law. Mary is then the church from the nations, which chose the “portion” of the spiritual law, [a law that is being set aside like the glory on the face of Moses]. She picked out the useful things from the law, or brought everything back to the one word, “You shall love.” For “one thing is needed” you would apply “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” and for “few things are needed” you would apply “You know the commandments: do not commit adultery, do not murder,” and so on. Again, Martha can be the believers from the circumcision who practice Jewish ways, keeping the things of the law in a Jewish manner. Mary would be those who have been set free from these things, “Jews in secret,” who sit only at the feet of Jesus, who set their minds on “things above, not on things on the earth.” For if you look at it from different angles, you will find Martha more bodily and “troubled about many things,” and Mary devoted to contemplation alone and to spiritual things.

FRAGMENT 40

“Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also...” Then, to show that he was still urging him toward teaching about prayer, he makes this appeal. John, about whom you taught us that “among those born of women there is none greater than he,” did not neglect teaching about prayer. We also do not know how to pray as we ought. And you have commanded us to ask for great and eternal things. Where, then, can we learn these things, if not from you, our God and Savior?

FRAGMENT 41

This is the same as the prayer in Matthew, which is why it is stated more briefly here. Or it is better to think of them as different prayers that have some parts in common. God’s will “is done as in heaven, so on earth” when we do nothing contrary to his will. But how can the one who said we must ask for heavenly and great things command us to ask for bread? So “bread” must be understood as the true and spiritual bread.

FRAGMENT 42

“Father, may your name be hallowed.” I think no one could say “Father” to God unless he were filled with the “Spirit of adoption.” A son who glorifies his father would say “Father,” and he would also have kept the commandment that says: “Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in the heavens, because he makes his

sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Again, a person is born of God by “doing righteousness.” Being born, and having received God’s “seed in himself,” so that he is “no longer able to sin,” he could say “Father.” Again, a person is born of God not from corruptible seed but through the living and abiding word of God, as it is written. For John says: “But as many as received him, he gave them the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.” He says this not to raise us up to the nature of God, but to share his grace with us and to give us the gift of his own dignity. For he tells us to call God Father. Then Matthew adds “in the heavens” to “our Father.” He was speaking about the kingdom of the heavens, and he was recounting how the Savior taught all who were present the word about prayer after the beatitudes. Luke, though he teaches about the kingdom of God throughout his whole Gospel, is silent about “in the heavens.” He is teaching that the divine is higher than any place. And Christ is explaining the word about prayer privately to the disciples, as people higher than the rest. Luke also does not add “to be delivered from the evil one,” as Matthew does.

FRAGMENT 43

Or perhaps it is like this. The name “God” is applied by those who fall away from the truth to carved images and demons, or even to “the creation instead of the Creator.” So the name of God has not yet been “hallowed,” and it has not yet been separated from those things from which it must be separated. He therefore teaches us to pray that the good end may come more quickly, so that the title “God” may be fitted to the Lord as “the only true God.” And with this interpretation we can clearly fit the next petition as well. Which one is that? “Your kingdom come.”

FRAGMENT 44

“Your kingdom come.” Let death no longer “reign” against me, and let it no longer lead me captive through sin. Instead, “let your kingdom come” upon me, so that the passions that now rule and reign may withdraw into non-being. One could ask these things also with regard to the kingdom as it comes about in each individual.

FRAGMENT 45

“Your kingdom come,” so that “every rule and authority and power” may be abolished, and also every kingdom of the world, and the sin that reigns in our mortal bodies, and so that God may reign over all of these.

FRAGMENT 46

“Give us each day our epiousion bread.” The followers of Marcion have the wording like this: “Give us each day your epiousion bread.” Since they flee from allegories and spiritual interpretations, let us press them with a difficulty: what is the bread of God? If they explain it as we have given, then clearly they are using allegory. But if they take it to be bodily bread, how can this belong to their supposedly good God? And “each day” is necessarily added. For our true life is, as it were, something that must be repaired [day by day], so that “the inner man” may live according to God.

FRAGMENT 47

“Each day” is more emphatic than Matthew’s “today.”

FRAGMENT 48

“Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him?” The words “which of you” are spoken to the disciples. “Will have a friend” is meant to say that God is a friend to the saints, as he was to Moses and to Abraham. Perhaps this “midnight,” which is called “shut in” [or “cramped”], is the time of this life, when the destroyer enters every house of the Egypt that is in the world, wherever the doorposts have not been anointed with the blood of Christ. The disciple asks his friend for “three loaves,” wanting to feed with the teaching about the Trinity the one who has come to him from the road. As he says: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” But how is it that the friend answers from inside, saying, “Do not cause me trouble”? You might also ask whether we who are “weary and burdened” bring our troubles upon the Savior, which is why “he bears our weaknesses and suffers pain for us.” Or else, just as God is said to sleep in one case, and in another case, to be angry with someone who sins, so too he is said to have troubles from the one who brings them to him.

FRAGMENT 49

“Ask, and it will be given to you.” The Savior’s statement, “Ask, and it will be given to you,” is true, and he confirms it by saying, “Everyone who asks

receives.” Still, someone might ask how it is that some people pray and are not heard. To this we must say: whoever comes to ask by the proper way, leaving out nothing that contributes to obtaining what he is eager for, will certainly receive what he begged to be given. But if someone strays from the purpose of the request that was handed down to us, and only seems to ask, then he is not asking in the way he should, and he is not really asking at all. So when he does not receive, the saying “Everyone who asks receives” is not proved false. Consider a teacher who says, “Everyone who comes to me for lessons will gain knowledge of them.” We understand “coming to the teacher” in a practical sense: that is, paying close attention to what the teacher says, and practicing and studying it. To the one who does not come this way, we must say, “You did not come to him as he urged you.” James makes this clearer when he writes in his letter: “Some ask and do not receive, because they ask badly, for the sake of empty pleasures.” Someone will object: “But some people ask for divine knowledge and for the acquiring of virtues, and they do not receive.” To him we must answer that they did not seek to receive these good things for their own sake, but in order to be praised because of them. Taking pleasure in praise belongs to lovers of pleasure. So these people are not given anything either, since they want to spend on pleasures the very things they ask for.

FRAGMENT 50

“Which of you, if his son asks his father...” Consider whether “bread” is the soul’s necessary food in knowledge, without which it cannot be saved, such as the precise teaching about how one ought to live. And “fish” would be like a relish, the love of learning, such as “knowing the structure of the world, the working of the elements, the beginning and end and middle of times,” and everything else that Wisdom goes on to list. So God does not give a stone in place of bread, which the devil wanted Jesus to eat. Nor does he give “a serpent in place of a fish.” The serpent is eaten by the Ethiopians, who are unworthy to eat fish. For there the psalm says: “You crushed the head of the dragon on the water; you gave him as food to the Ethiopian peoples.” Nor, in simple terms, does he give what is inedible and harmful in place of what is nourishing and beneficial.

FRAGMENT 51

“When the unclean spirit goes out of the person, it passes through...” What does it mean that the evil spirit “passes through waterless places, seeking rest and not finding it”? The waterless places were once the people from the nations. Now they have been filled with water [of mine?], and they no longer give it rest. So Satan turns back to his former dwelling, those from Israel. When they were in Egypt, the evil spirit lived in them, because they shared the customs and laws of the Egyptians. When they were set free through Moses by God’s mercy, it went out. But now they have not believed in Christ. They have pushed away the Redeemer, and so the unclean spirit has leapt on them again. It found nothing divine left in them, only emptiness, and them standing idle and open to its dwelling, and so it settled in with all its power. This seems to be what the text shows when it says that “seven” spirits are with it. Scripture is accustomed to name such a number for a multitude, as when it says, “The barren woman bore seven, and she who had many children grew weak.” For the spirit they had in Egypt is not the kind that [those who acted against my son] now have. They have been filled with other evil spirits as well, and “the last things have become worse than the first.” They are now worse off than they were in Egypt, because they did not believe in Jesus Christ but “killed the author of life,” and so they were deprived of life. No prophet says to them any longer, “Thus says the Lord.” There is no longer any sign among them, no wonder, no sign of God’s appearing and presence. The good things have passed over to us from the nations, according to the word of Jesus, who said, “The kingdom of God will be taken from them and given to a nation producing its fruits.” We are that nation, to whom belongs “the kingdom of God,” the way of life of the gospel.

FRAGMENT 52

“No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place or under the measuring bowl.” Let the fellow servants have their grain measured out in the measuring bowl by “the faithful and wise steward.” But let “all those in the house,” that is, in the church, see the rays of the lamp as it stands on the lampstand and is brought into the open through the word. Nor do people put the lamp “under the bed,” where someone lies down to rest, or “under any vessel.” Whoever does this takes no thought for those who are coming into the house.

FRAGMENT 53

^{53a} “The lamp of the body is your eye.” It seems to me that in the words “the lamp of the body is the eye” he is saying something like this: the faculty of seeing clearly in the whole soul, in the whole person, is the mind. And so that we would take care of it, it was said, “Let your lamps be burning.” For we light, as it were, the lamp within us when we take care of our power of understanding. “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place, but on the lampstand” is a saying of the same kind. For those light a lamp who care about wisdom and reason and training in divine things, so that they may become perfect. Perfection comes to a person in no other way than through the training of the faculties of perception, both of the senses and of the mind, in divine matters. Paul made this clear when he said, “Solid food belongs to the perfect, who through habit have their faculties trained to distinguish good from evil.” These are the people to whom the wisdom spoken to the perfect can be spoken, about which he says, “We speak wisdom among the perfect.” By “eye” he means, properly speaking, the mind in us. In the earnest person only, the source of this mind is simplicity, with no double-mindedness, deceit, splitting, dissension or division in it. In the base person, its source is wickedness and every sin. Consider also whether you can interpret “body” figuratively in a way that fits with “eye.” Either the whole soul, even though it is not bodily, is here called “the body” (for God made the mind in the soul of a human being), or else what remains besides the mind, that is, the composite of the rest of the soul and the body, is what he calls the body.

^{53b} For the whole soul is properly enlightened by the mind. Yet one could say that the mind’s simplicity reaches even to the body, when the body is led by the mind. Or its wickedness reaches the body, when the mind uses the body as an instrument for sin. Do not be surprised if in the saying “the lamp of the body is the eye” we take “body” figuratively for the soul. The soul is, in its own definition, invisible and bodiless, for it was made according to the image of the invisible God. But we find that the powers of the soul are also figuratively called by the same names as the bodily parts, though they are not bodies. For in the words “enlighten my eyes” bodily eyes are not meant. In “he added an ear for me” the discourse is not about bodies either, nor when he says, “Let the one who has ears to hear, hear.” In the Song, the bride is either the soul of a person brought up to share with Christ as her bridegroom, or the church. There the bridegroom praises her hair in particular,

her teeth, her lips, her neck and her breasts. If these are explained of the soul, they are referred to its powers. You could also find the words “my foot shall not stumble” applied to the soul’s power of moving forward. You will find many such passages yourself if you pay attention to Scripture. They will keep you from stumbling over how “body” is meant in the saying

53c “the lamp of the body is the eye,” and in similar places. In Proverbs you will find “divine perception” spoken of as a promise, in contrast to perception that is not divine. The perception that even the irrational animals share is not divine: they see and hear, taste, smell and touch. The perception that is divine is one that not even all human beings share. It belongs to those who have done such things as the verse refers to when it adds, “you will find divine perception.” So do not be surprised if the name “body,” by analogy with the names of the body’s parts, which are referred to the powers of the soul, is applied to the whole soul in the saying “the lamp of the body is the eye.” We do not say this as though the word “body” is explained figuratively everywhere. We know that the name “body” is also used of other things, as in “do not fear those who kill the body,” and “you are the body of Christ.”

FRAGMENT 54

I think the meaning of the next saying is this. If, because “your body has become full of light,” the body has been enlightened by its lamp, and there is no part in you still dark, since you no longer sin at all, then the whole body will be so full of light that its rays can be compared to a lamp in a flash of lightning that gives light, even if it does not dispel darkness. The enlightenment that comes from the mind is like the brightest lightning. The light in the body is like a lamp in the flashing lightning. By nature that lamp is darkness, and it is led wherever the mind wishes. So if the mind of those living in ignorance and lack of knowledge, though by nature it is light, is darkness, then certainly the whole body, that is, the passionate part of the soul, which is the spirited and desiring part, is much more darkness.

FRAGMENT 55

“See to it, then, that the light in you is not darkness.” He says: it was possible for you to make your mind pure, and through this to make both your words and your actions shine. But you do the opposite. From the very place where you ought to bring out light, you bring out darkness, since you harbor envy out of wicked thoughts.

FRAGMENT 56

“Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered.” Either he is speaking about that time when “God will judge the secrets of men” and “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make plain the counsels of hearts.” Or he means this: however much someone tries to cover up good things by accusing them, by nature what is good cannot be covered.

FRAGMENT 57

“Are not five sparrows sold for two assarions?” Notice that Luke did not speak of a sparrow falling to the ground, as Matthew did. Here the five sparrows hint at the five senses of the righteous person. These senses perceive things above and beyond the human: they see divine things, hear the voice of God, taste “the living bread,” smell the fragrance of Christ’s perfumes, and touch “the oil of gladness,” the living Word. Though they are despised by those who judge “the things of the Spirit” to be folly and cheap, they “are not forgotten before God.” If the Word himself was sold for thirty pieces of silver, it is no wonder that divine senses go for two assarions. Compare the passage that says not even the smallest sparrow “is forgotten before God” with the passages that show God forgetting some people because of their sins. Taken literally, these words show how fine-grained God’s providence is, and that his knowledge reaches down to the smallest things. Taken spiritually, people fall to the earth like sparrows. The mind should be carried upward, but instead it seeks the things below, caught in the evils of the flesh. It has been handed over “to passions of dishonor,” and has lost both its freedom and its honor. Such is the person who was lifted up by the Word and then set his mind on earthly things. Again, on the literal level, “it will not fall to the ground without your Father” does not point to his will but to his foreknowledge. Of the things that happen, some happen by his will, some by his good pleasure, and some by his permission.

FRAGMENT 58

“And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many good things.” “You have many good things laid up.” He spoke as one who was lying down below, “You have good things laid up for many years,” and he was mistaken in his judgment about what is good. He did not know that the things that are truly good are not in the cursed earth but in heaven. There the rest and joy of the blessed in Christ Jesus last not “for many years” but for endless ages.

FRAGMENT 59

“Let your loins be girded.” The loins of those who live in purity are girded. But since our life is also a night, we need a lamp. The lamp is the mind, which is the eye of the soul. And if wakefulness belongs to the “inner person,” it is reasonable that we need to be awake for much or all of this life, both because of those who lie in wait (I mean “rulers and authorities”) [the text is defective here, “against which . . .”], and so that we may find “a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the God of Jacob,” and sometimes so that we may open to the master when he knocks. Notice that a reward is given for staying awake. For he says, “He will gird himself,” and he is “girded about the loin” in the sense of the words, “The Lord has clothed himself with power and girded himself.” In that power he will “make each one recline” according to worth, and will “serve” each one according to worth, “rendering to each according to his works.”

FRAGMENT 60

Furthermore, the thief comes plotting against each person’s soul, and the Word of God appears to guard his own. So stay awake. If “the thief” comes and finds the master of the house awake, he will not break into “his house.” And if “the Son of Man” arrives, you will be able to open to him “immediately” when he knocks. For if he finds you asleep and you do not open when he knocks, he goes away and leaves you. After this life, the one who has stayed awake in it “will sleep sweetly and will not be afraid of a terror that comes.” So “David fell asleep with his fathers,” and so did those after him. Up to now I have not found this written of any of the saints who came from foreign seed. Perhaps that is also why the apostle says, “We shall not all fall asleep.” If we shall all fall asleep, then “blessed are the slaves whom the Lord, when he comes, finds awake.” They are blessed because he gives them their reward without delay, since they are “girded about the loin with righteousness.” He comes at the time when a person’s soul is to be demanded, whatever sort of person he may be. For if he came to the one who said, “I will pull down my storehouses and make bigger ones,” and “said to him, ‘Fool, this night they are demanding your soul from you,’” how much more will he come to the blessed and holy, who after “departing” will be with the Lord?

FRAGMENT 61

Luke 12:36: “And you be like people waiting for their master.” There is sleep and there is wakefulness, in the inner person just as in the outer. We are required to stay awake, as the Savior says: “Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation.” In Proverbs it is also said: “Give no sleep to your eyes, and no slumber to your eyelids.” But there is also a time to sleep, when the Savior says: “Sleep on now, and rest,” and when Solomon says: “If you sleep, you will be without fear; and if you sleep, your sleep will be sweet, and you will not be afraid of terror when it comes upon you.”

FRAGMENT 62

Still, for most of this life, or even all of it, we must keep watch. One reason is that the enemies lie in wait. They are not “blood and flesh,” but “authorities and world-rulers of this world, and the spiritual forces of wickedness.” By staying awake we may be saved “like gazelles from snares and like a bird from a trap.” We are also to have our loins girded and our lamps burning, so that we become “like people waiting for their master, so that when he comes and knocks, we may open to him at once.” Consider also whether there is a reason, because of the first, second and third watch of the night, or even a fourth, that Solomon says, so that we may be watching in all of them: “Guard your heart with every watch.”

FRAGMENT 63

Luke 12:37: “Truly I say to you, that he will gird himself and have them recline.” I think Christ “will gird himself” for this reason: he is about to have those whom he finds watching recline at table, since according to Isaiah “he will be girded with righteousness around the loins.” What of the words, “he will come and serve them”? See whether you can name two kinds of service. One is the service in this life, of which he said: “I am in your midst, not as one who reclines at table, but as one who serves.” The other is the one he speaks of here: “And if he comes in the second watch, and comes in the third watch, and finds them so, those servants are blessed.”

FRAGMENT 64

^{64a} Luke 12:42: “Who then is the faithful, wise steward?” It seems to me that here “faithful” and “wise” should not be understood as referring to one single virtue. “Faithful” does not refer to faith in the particular sense the Scripture gives that word, and “wise” does not refer to some other virtue by

itself. For certainly the faithful person is wise, and conversely the wise person is faithful, since the virtues follow one another. But the name “wise” is sometimes used not for the virtue of prudence that has been fully established, but to describe someone who is resourceful, who can even be a bad person. In this sense “the serpent was the wisest of all the wild animals on the earth.” In the same way here, “faithful” does not mean perfect; it means that the person’s purpose has leaned toward faith in God. In this sense it is possible that not every faithful person is wise, and not every wise person is faithful. That the steward too, according to the divine writings themselves, is wise but not faithful, is clear from this. It was not the act of a faithful man to squander the rich man’s property, to call in each of his master’s debtors and reduce the debt. That he was not faithful is plainly seen. But that he was in some sense wise is also clear: the Lord praises his resourcefulness, while blaming his unfaithfulness, and for that reason says to him: “You can no longer be steward.” Perhaps for ordinary people in the crowds, faith, as we said before, is enough for salvation. But stewards need both, the faithful and the wise. For a steward who is not like this will not be able to judge the right time for giving out the measured portion of grain to those under him, or what suits each one.

^{64b} So there are many stewards of the churches who are faithful but not prudent, and some who are the opposite. For this reason the Lord put his words in the form of a question, to show very clearly how rare and hard to find are stewards who are faithful and prudent together. The one who is found, the Lord appointed over his servants. In the same way the Savior chose Judas. He was not ignorant of what would happen later, but he made use of him for the work of apostolic service during the time before his transgression, when his will was still moving toward virtue. The good laid up for the faithful and prudent steward is [greater] than what is said to the one who multiplied the mina tenfold or fivefold. This is no wonder, since it is greater even than what is given to others who differ from these. Fixed cities are handed over to those who worked with the minas, and great numbers to those who doubled the talents. Much greater than these is to be set not only over many things but “over all the possessions” of the Lord. This is laid up for the faithful and prudent steward, who through faith has set himself [worthy] of all his possessions. You may ask whether, if several faithful and prudent stewards are found, each of them can be set “over all the possessions”

of the Lord. For if it is “over all,” how does another have a place over the ten cities, and still more over several? Let this be said as an encouragement.

FRAGMENT 65

“For from now on there will be five in one house, divided.” The persons in the Gospel are six, so we must say that one person, the bride, is cut in two, into daughter-in-law and daughter, since the same woman quarrels with both her mother and her mother-in-law. In this way it turns out that three are divided against two and two against three. Now for the higher sense. The five senses are like five in one house, the human being. Before the Word comes to them, they agree together in pleasures, but when he takes up residence they are divided. Two are the more philosophical: sight, by which we look at the world, admire its order, and so admire its Creator; and hearing, by which we are taught by the word of God. These stand against the remaining three: taste, smell and touch. Those are the slavish senses, not naturally suited to philosophy, and the three work rather against the two. The saying “father will be divided against son” must be read as a fresh beginning, not connected with the earlier words. Literally it shows the division of believers from unbelievers. Symbolically, the “father,” the mind, is divided “against son,” a wicked line of reasoning, by not agreeing with it. “And son against father” is the one who does not bury his dead father. “Mother against daughter” is the soul not accepting its own wicked fruit. “Daughter against mother” is the soul no longer united with matter. “Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law” is the mother of the Law (the husband of the soul under him), I mean the Holy Spirit, who has left the people of the circumcision. “Daughter-in-law against mother-in-law” is the people who, through sinning, were separated from the Spirit.

FRAGMENT 66

“Someone had a fig tree planted.” A fourth way to understand it is as the time of the incarnation. In that time he pricks Israel and digs around it, warming it, so as to make them fervent in spirit. But since after so many warnings they stayed fruitless, the fig tree was cut down and the nations were grafted into their root, for the root remained. Or else we must understand the vinedresser to be some angel, commanded by God to take charge of Jerusalem, which is itself compared to a fruitless fig tree.

FRAGMENT 67

“It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid.” There is another way to take it: the woman as the church, the leaven as the Holy Spirit, and the three measures as body, spirit and soul. These are made holy by the leaven of the Holy Spirit, so that with the Holy Spirit they become one lump. In this way “our body and the spirit and the soul may be kept whole, blameless, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as the divine Paul says.

FRAGMENT 68

“When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends.” According to the letter, then, we are commanded not to call friends and neighbors but “the poor and the maimed, the lame and the blind.” But suppose he is not saying this as a wise accommodation, as in parables, so that even the simpler may be helped as far as they can. Then he is turning us away from our duties. For it is not wise to invite poor people who are not believers, or to refuse to invite poor people who are faithful friends. Perhaps, then, the meaning is mystical. “Friends” are those who delight in the word and in the teachings of the truth. “Brothers” are those who hold kindred teachings. “Relatives” are those who are further off but want to draw near to us in teaching. “Neighbors” are those whose buildings of doctrine are not altogether far from ours. Taken generally, then, “rich” is to be understood [ploysqioyw, the Greek word is corrupt]. But the man who is rich in what he thinks are true teachings is called to the truly true word. He speaks against the truth and, as it were, invites the teacher in return. But since “not many among us are wise,” though some are, we must ask whether these too should be invited. Those who announce lectures invite the rich and not the poor. But the one who serves the word for true glory is free of vainglory. “Invite the poor,” he says. That means those who lack words, so that you may be enriched. “The maimed” are those whose understanding has been damaged, so that you may heal them. “The lame” are those who limp in the word, so that they may make straight paths. “The blind” are those who lack the power of insight, so that they may see the true light. “They cannot repay you” means the same as this: they do not know how to carry on a discussion by question and answer, or by dialectic. Out of love for humanity, God and Father is proclaimed as a man for those not yet able to “eat lunch in the kingdom of God.” As a man he gives a dinner, and a great one, for the dinner surpasses the lunch. The

lunch is the introductory words, or the ethical ones, or the ancient oracles. The dinner is the mystical words for those who are advancing, or the words of the new covenant. "Resurrection of the just" he says here, which John in the Revelation calls the first.

FRAGMENT 69

"And they all alike began to make excuses." They were called as people naturally quick. But they fall away from the calling in three ways: by the appearance of higher intelligible teachings, by the pursuit of sensible things instead of intelligible ones, and by love of pleasure. Those who bought a field, and who therefore decline the dinner, are those who received other teachings about the divine that have great plausibility and variety of argument. They also despise the field that has in itself a "treasure" and powers. The man who has not seen or tested the word he acquired, because he was already taken up by it out of necessity and not willingly, goes out from the dinner and from the one who called him, and perhaps even from himself. They say "I ask you," as if they respected the one who called only in word. The man who bought five yoke of oxen is the one who despises intelligible nature and philosophizes about sensible things. He too did not test from the beginning what he had bought. If the number belongs to matter, this man honored material things. So he too declined the intelligible dinner. That is why in some copies, instead of "I ask you," the text reads "and for this reason I cannot come." For those who choose sensible things say that the incorporeal cannot be grasped. The other is the one who said, "I have married a wife." He seems to have found wisdom and shared in it, yet rejects the true one. Or he is the one joined to the flesh, "a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God."

FRAGMENT 70

"For which of you, wanting to build a tower..." The tower, with its height, span and loftiness, would be the word about God. So he hints through the parable: if you are about to speak about God, consider whether you are able to finish what you begin. The word demands that everything be brought to completion for the sake of speaking about God. Otherwise you may begin the teachings of godliness, leave the word about God unfinished, and not build a crowning top upon it. For if he has not built the crown on it, someone will fall from the tower and die.

FRAGMENT 71

You can also understand the prodigal's desire to be filled with the carob pods in this way. The rational nature, once it has fallen into irrationality, still desires something, even if it is not in better reasonings, at least in whatever it has ended up among. Carob pods taste sweet and fatten the body, but they give the refuse no way out. So they would stand for the persuasive arguments of those who love matter and love the body, who call pleasure a good, who have itching ears and turn aside to myths. [And the wicked hand on nothing that no one has seen, so that they will not be refuted.] Besides, the arguments of [such people] give no nourishment, and they cannot fill the part of us that receives and distributes rational food.

FRAGMENT 72

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you." I left the heavenly things behind, and I added to it the ungodliness against you. The Word shows human misery to be misery by telling the story of his departure and his strange conduct. But the Word does not bring him back to his original good fortune until he has felt his present disaster, come to himself, and rehearsed the words of repentance. For he says "I have sinned" and so on. He would not have added to his confession the sin "against heaven" unless he was convinced that heaven was his homeland, which he had left when he went wrong. For this reason the rehearsing of such a confession makes the father easy for him to approach, so that the father even ran ahead to meet him and welcomed him with a kiss on the neck.

FRAGMENT 73

If we must look at this passage in a still loftier way, the father begins with ethical teachings, which are like food, in the words "having eaten." He goes on to teachings of contemplation, which are like drink, in the words "let us be merry." For "wine is the beginning of good cheer," as it is written.

FRAGMENT 74

The word "symphony" is properly used for harmonies of voices in music. Among musicians some notes are in concord with certain notes and out of concord with others. The Gospel writing also knows the word used for musical harmonies, as it is here. In the book of Daniel, too, it is recorded that Nebuchadnezzar gave a command. When the assembled people heard "the sound of the trumpet, pipe and lyre, sambuca and harp, and symphony and

every kind of music,” they were to fall down and worship the golden image. “Because they received him back healthy”: healthy, because through repentance he had thrown off the sickness.

FRAGMENT 75

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away.” The one stroke is not only the iota among the Greeks, but also, among the Hebrews, the letter they call “yod.” The words “one iota or one stroke” can be said symbolically of Jesus. The beginning of his name is written with the iota among the Greeks, and also with the yod among the Hebrews. So “one iota or one stroke” is Jesus, the Word of God in the law. He does not pass away from it “until all things have come to pass,” and he does not fall. [For he does fall, for salvation, so that he may bear “much fruit.”] But if he did fall, it would be easier for “heaven and earth to pass away” than for “one stroke” to be lost from the law concerning him. Having “fallen into the earth,” he died so that he might bear more fruit. He was not defeated. Rather, he “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

FRAGMENT 76

“There was a certain rich man.” In the words of Solomon, “a good name is better than great riches.” But this man did not think so. He thought it better to have great riches than a good name. So he is called by what he loved: he is named “rich,” not “holy” or “righteous.” The poor man, who had nothing in this world, is called Lazarus, a bare name. But notice how the Savior of all sets out the marks that characterize the rich man. “He was clothed,” he says, “in purple and fine linen, and made merry splendidly every day.” He does not even give the man his proper name. He says, “a certain man,” so that he attaches obscurity to what is common, and in that obscurity brings the common lot of men in for disgrace. With the righteous it is not so. How is it, then? “There was a man,” he says, “in the land of Ausitis, whose name was Job.” And, “There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Symeon.” Why? Because of the one he adds, “And that man was blameless, guileless, righteous, true, God-fearing, abstaining from every evil thing.” And of the other, “And this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit of God was upon him.” Job also was rich. But he did not live in luxury and self-indulgence. With a loving mind his house was open to anyone in need. He wronged no one; rather, when others were

wronged, he helped them, and he supplied widows and orphans with what they needed to live. For these are the just acts of righteous rich men.

FRAGMENT 77

“He sees Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Someone wanted to discredit the account of the rich man and the poor man. Out of ignorance of the Gospel he raised this objection: if Lazarus was reclining in the bosom of Abraham, then before he departed this life another was reclining in Abraham’s bosom, and another before him. And when yet another righteous man departs, he says, the poor man will have to get up. But the man who raises this objection did not see what Abraham’s bosom is. He did not see that it is possible for countless people to rest together in Abraham’s bosom, sharing in what was revealed to him. John, the beloved, is a parallel. At the supper he reclined “on the bosom of Jesus,” as the history tells it. He was counted worthy of this honor as one judged worthy of his teacher’s special love. But the account also points to something symbolic. John, reclining close to the Word and resting in the more mystical teachings, was reclining in the bosom of the Word. This corresponds to the fact that the “only-begotten” Word himself is written of as being “in the bosom of the Father.”

FRAGMENT 78

“You know the commandments.” The madness of the Marcionites [and the Manichaeans] is refuted by this passage. They say the law is foreign to Christ. Yet Mark says, “Jesus, looking at him, loved him.” He would not have loved, for his keeping of something foreign, a man who spoke boldly about that keeping. The passage raises a question: how was he loved, when he was not going to follow toward life? The answer is that for his earlier conduct the man who kept the law was worthy of love. But by his faintheartedness toward what is perfect, he did not allow the love given for his earlier conduct to become complete.

FRAGMENT 79

“I will judge you out of your own mouth, wicked servant.” We will all be judged for our whole life, at the time when an account that speaks for us is brought into the middle. That account will include “every idle word that people speak,” and also the case where someone once gave “a cup of cold water” only “in the name of a disciple.” These things will happen when what Daniel wrote comes to pass: “Books were opened, and the court took its seat.”

It will be like a written record of everything we have said, done and thought. By divine power everything hidden in us will be made plain, and everything covered will be uncovered. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for the things done through the body, whether good or bad.” Let no one suppose that such a reckoning of everyone, over a whole lifetime here, will need long ages. God will wish to stir up in everyone’s memory, all at once, the good or evil done through the whole of life. He will do this by indescribable power, and he will remind each person of what he did. Then, becoming aware of what we have done, we will understand why we are punished or honored. We must dare to say that the time of the expected judgment needs no stretch of time. The resurrection is said to happen “in an instant, in the blink of an eye,” and I think the judgment will be the same. In this parable ten servants are found, each receiving one mina. In another parable one servant receives five talents, another two, another one. Elsewhere there are debtors, one owing five hundred denarii and another fifty. Suppose someone considers how varied the human soul is. Souls differ greatly from one another in natural aptitude or lack of it, toward more or fewer virtues, and toward these virtues or those. Then perhaps he will grasp how each soul has come, and with which of the householder’s coins it appeared. He will see this together with the fulfilling of the word, and with the care and training that follow that fulfilling, toward what is needed.

FRAGMENT 80

The Jews thought and acted like robbers. They had made God’s house “a den of robbers,” and for that reason Jesus drove them out of it. About the robber Barabbas they shouted, “Release Barabbas for us.” About the Savior of the world they shouted, “Crucify him, crucify him.” So to this day the Jews do not have Jesus, because they have not believed in the Son of God. They do have with them Barabbas the robber, who belongs to “the spiritual forces of wickedness.” He had already been arrested and thrown into prison, and they demanded his release to their own harm. This is why Barabbas the robber rules over the unbelieving Jews.

FRAGMENT 81

This saying troubled some people so much, as though it did not fit with the rest, that they dared to suspect it had been added to the Gospel by some med-

dlers: "Today you will be with me in paradise." We say, more simply, that perhaps, before he went away to what is called the heart of the earth, he restored the believing robber to God's paradise.

FRAGMENT 82

John did not mention this at all, and Matthew and Mark named neither the sun nor an eclipse. Luke says, "the sun failing." Perhaps he is describing what happened in our own experience. It may have been a dark cloud, or clouds running under the sun's rays and cutting them off from the land of Judea. Or the air there may have thickened, sharing in what had happened, as the land around Judea did, and the rocks and the tombs. In many places Scripture calls all of Judea "all the land." This happened so that people would know that the one hanging on the tree is the very one who took creation as his fellow-soldier. He did the same when "he made war on the Egyptians for their sake," when the sun's light failed and darkness was spread over their whole country.

FRAGMENT 83

"When the sun failed." Zechariah also prophesied about this eclipse, saying: "In that day there will be no light. There will be cold and frost for one day, and that day is known to the Lord. It will be neither day nor night, and toward evening there will be light." The darkness is an image of the darkening of those who lay hands on the Light. For as there was darkness for the Egyptians and light for the sons of Israel, so now there is light for the church, but for the Jews a darkness of three hours. It is a darkness of the Father's light, of the radiance of Christ, and of the shining of the Holy Spirit. Man was made on the sixth day. So perhaps for this reason the Lord, suffering for the salvation of men, was hung on the cross at the sixth hour of the sixth day. He did this to call back the one who was made on the sixth day and fell out of paradise at the sixth hour.

FRAGMENT 84

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." This cry, which he uttered on the cross, teaches that the souls of the saints are no longer shut up in Hades as they were before. They are with God, since this has happened in Christ as a firstfruits. The place where souls were held and confined was below, but the Lord, through himself, moved this journey from downward to upward. Human nature was found in him to be rich in sinlessness. So he has made some-

thing new for us: souls released from their bodies are sent “into the hands of the living God.” The holy Stephen knew this when he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” The word “I commit” teaches that the passion was voluntary, and shows that the spirit is not destroyed. [For “I will commit” would have indicated that he would receive it back again.]

FRAGMENT 85

“Jesus himself drew near and went with them.” The glory of the Lord’s body, which Paul also mentions, was shown to the disciples at the transfiguration on the mountain. But after the resurrection he had to appear to the apostles and to the five hundred disciples, so that they would believe in the resurrection. So he was seen as they were able to see him, [and] as they knew him to have suffered, and he showed them the scars left by his sufferings. Notice also that when he was going away he left them peace, as John wrote, and when he came among them again he gave peace. Peace is a sweet thing and a sweet name.

FRAGMENT 86

“Were not our hearts burning within us?” [Another way of taking it:] Simon and Cleopas, in confessing “our heart was burning” and what follows, make clear something about the Savior’s words. The words he spoke came from love toward those who heard him. They had in them a flame of fire, and they burned, setting the hearts of the hearers alight with love for God.

FRAGMENT 87

“He lifted up his hands and blessed them.” Something like this is written about Aaron in Leviticus: that “lifting up his hands over the people, he blessed them.” I take the passage to hint here that anyone who blesses another must be adorned with works that are outstanding and lifted above those of the many. Aaron’s hands are lifted up when he is about to bless the people. If someone held his hands down toward earthly things, he could not accomplish what he wanted for anyone. In the same way, Moses’ hands did not help the people when they lay down, but only when they were lifted up. The lifting up of the Savior’s hands was a symbol of this. By works beyond human power he lifted his hands and saved those who believe. So perhaps everyone who is lifted up in his works has been crucified. In this sense Paul said, “I have been crucified to the world, and the world to me.” That is: the account of the world has been understood by me, and it has been lifted up and no

longer lies below. For to the one who has not understood the account of the world's making, the word has not been crucified. I think being crucified is good, as Paul experienced it, crucified with Christ. And the world, in relation to Paul's mind, was lifted up and understood by him. In another sense, the Lord lifts up his hands in order to put power into the disciples through the blessing.

FRAGMENT 88

"Give us each day our bread for the coming day [epiousion]." "Each day" is more emphatic than Matthew's "today." The inner man, who is properly the real being, dies if he does not get living bread, just as the body does if it is not fed. Death is the enemy of life, and he falls to it. Small-minded people suppose that the teacher is speaking about bodily bread when he says "not about tomorrow." They especially take "epiousion" to mean "the coming" or "the approaching" day. This is clear from his saying, "for you do not know what the coming day will bring forth," that is, the tomorrow that is approaching. As for the followers of Manes, either they will allegorize, which is not their custom, or they will be asking for the bread of the Creator.

FRAGMENT 89

"Since many have undertaken to compile." The word "undertaken" indicates that some came to the writing of gospels without a gift of grace. The word "compile" means to set out, to explain, to write down.

FRAGMENT 90

"Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses handed down to us." Luke plainly admitted that he received his material from those who had seen it with their own eyes and heard it with their own ears. He said, "just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and became servants of the word handed down to us." We should trust him and Mark as men who wrote down accurately what they had heard. We should trust John and Matthew as men who write what they had seen. So the lawful Gospels are to be honored equally. We honor not only the sight of those who saw but also the hearing of those who heard. For true men succeed true men, and they pass on to us the light that was handed to them, and they receive from us the praise they deserve.

FRAGMENT 91

“Both were righteous.” Perhaps someone will say: the law says, “If you keep the commandments of the Lord your God, he will multiply your grain and your wine and your oil, and there will be no one childless or barren among you.” If these two were righteous, then, where is the blessing? The reason is that those whom God advances to something great, such as Isaac, Samson and Samuel, are customarily brought beyond what the law provides. For the labor of a barren woman is close to that of a virgin.

FRAGMENT 92

“For he will be great before the Lord.” He will be great because he continually lifts the eye of his soul toward God and looks to him alone. This is in line with the one who says, “To you I lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in heaven.”

FRAGMENT 93

“Wine and strong drink he shall not drink.” “Strong drink” [sikera] is anything that can make a person drunk, [even if] it is not from the vine. It especially means what is prepared from dates.

FRAGMENT 94

“And he will go before him.” “He will go before in the spirit and [power] of Elijah.” That is, he goes before in the spirit and power of Elijah, who is the forerunner of the Lord’s second coming. As the prophet says, “I will send you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and conspicuous day of the Lord comes.” In the same way John became the forerunner of the first coming. He came “in spirit” because the grace of the all-holy Spirit that was on Elijah was likewise on the forerunner. He came “in power” because of the greatness of the ministry that was fulfilled by them both.

FRAGMENT 95

“To turn the hearts of fathers to children.” The same things passed over to John. But this is not how the order of nature wants it, which is that children follow their fathers rather than fathers serving sons. But he wants the ancient people to follow [the new people]. The ancient people stood in the place of fathers, and the second and new people stand in the place of sons, as it says, “Instead of your fathers, sons were born to you.” So he reverses the order, for he puts the synagogue back under the church. Explaining who the

fathers are and who the children are, he adds, “and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous.” The old among the Jews must follow the wisdom of the righteous.

FRAGMENT 96

“When he came out he could not speak to them.” Zechariah disbelieved the one who announced the birth of the voice that reveals the Word, and so he lost his own voice. He got it back and ended his painful silence when the forerunner was born, who is the voice of the Word, and when he wrote that “John is his name.” So we must give ear to the voice, so that the mind may receive the word that the voice reveals.

FRAGMENT 97

“When the days of his service were completed.” Zechariah had heard beforehand that something wonderful was going to happen to him. Even so, he did not hurry ahead of the proper time to make way for the prophecy. He stayed until he had finished his spiritual service, and only then served the prophecy through bodily things. In this he teaches that everything must be put second to the honor owed to God.

FRAGMENT 98

“She hid herself for five months.” For this reason Elizabeth said nothing, until almost everyone was exposing her and saying that she was pregnant, because of what they saw, even though she kept the matter hidden.

FRAGMENT 99

The words “he will be” and “he will be called” fit the plan of salvation in the flesh. So does “the Lord will give him.” It is because of this plan [that he is said to receive] “the throne of David.” Yet he is the same one, and in a way fitting for God he is also king forever.

FRAGMENT 100

“Behold, the [servant] of the Lord.” Mary was gracious and said to the angel, “Behold, the [servant] of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

FRAGMENT 101

“He looked upon her humility.” The Word did not come to be in Mary simply or without discrimination. It was because of her surpassing humility, which God loves and exalts highly, since she imitates him who humbled himself and took the form of a slave. So she says, “when he looked upon the

humility of his servant.” In Isaiah he says, “On whom will I look, except on the humble and quiet one who trembles at my words?” Then she says, “because he looked upon the humility of his servant” (for I am his servant as his creature, just like the rest of creation), “from now on they will call me blessed.” Not you alone, Elizabeth, but all [the generations] of those who believe. For even if what the mother of God said was not evident to people at that time, now, day by day, it speaks more widely, and the truth of what she prophesied becomes plain.

FRAGMENT 102

“The Mighty One has done great things for me.” Someone might disbelieve that the conception could really take place, if she conceived while a virgin. So she [sets] the unbelief [to rest] by the name “the Mighty One.” In this way a person may credit the accomplishment to the power of the one who works it. He will then not examine the matter by the course of nature and fall away from true assent to what truly happened.

FRAGMENT 103

“He brought down rulers from their thrones.” He also calls “rulers” the very ones whom he brought down and then lifted up. These are the ones who humbled themselves “under his mighty hand.” To them he has given “authority to tread upon snakes and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy.” The “hungry” are those from the nations, starving for divine things and for teaching. “He filled” them “with good things” of the new covenant.

FRAGMENT 104

“He was in the deserts.” So everything about him was strange. His food was strange. He was chosen out of the world, as one announcing the Christ who is above the world. He was in the desert from the start, living outside the wickedness found among people, so that he would be trustworthy when he rebuked it. He did not begin to frequent the people in the cities until the Spirit in him urged him to show himself publicly.

FRAGMENT 105

“Now it happened in those days.” Which days? Those in which the Baptist was born. The forerunner of the Savior was six months ahead of him in the conception, and was born six months before him. As the more careful students have observed, he also died six months before the Savior’s ascension. “When Augustus was the first to reign,” he says, “a decree went out.” Before

Augustus, Julius Caesar alone ruled, and he came after the consuls. Before him the pattern was consuls as kings, each for one year. But when Augustus became king, he ended the rule of many and, having taken hold, stayed on as king. The preaching was about to run to the ends of the earth. The apostles could not pass from nation to nation, struggling with different kings and being attacked by each one. So God leveled the earth beforehand under a single kingdom, so that the apostles might preach as though into one kingdom.

FRAGMENT 106

“He brought him up to Jerusalem.” The Lord is circumcised on the eighth day. He is named Jesus, as had been foretold. Then, when the days were completed, he is brought up to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord according to the law that says, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.” Anyone can grasp one thing here: he himself is the one who sanctifies, and he himself is the one who is sanctified. Not everyone grasps the other: these things were spoken and carried out in the ordinary way, yet they pointed to something deeper than what could be seen. For on behalf of a male firstborn, and on behalf of him as he was brought, “a pair of turtledoves and two pigeons” were offered. I think the turtledoves are meant to show self-control and [the rest of the sentence is missing or corrupt in the Greek].

FRAGMENT 107

“After three days they found him.” They did not find him on the first or the second day, but on the third, when he himself chose to show himself to those seeking him. The account also holds a riddle. In his twelfth year he is hidden for three days. Before the passion, he announces the passion, the one that concerned the twelve disciples. At that time he was hidden from them too, and he rose and appeared [again; the Greek reads “a city”] [before the three], the three-day time before the time. [The last words are uncertain and the text may be corrupt.]

FRAGMENT 108

“In the fifteenth year of Tiberius.” Christ was born in the forty-first year of Caesar Augustus. Augustus reigned fifty-six years, so fifteen remained. Then Tiberius reigned after him. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius’s reign John

came baptizing, and at that time Jesus was also baptized, “being about thirty years old,” as the evangelist says further on.

FRAGMENT 109

“In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.” He also mentions the high priests Annas and Caiaphas to show that they were high priests from the time John came preaching. They began at that time and remained in the high priesthood until the Lord’s passion. For about Caiaphas he says that, when he said about Christ, “It is to our advantage that one man [die] for the people,” the writer immediately added, “for he was high priest of that [year].” So he said this two years before the passion, for the Lord suffered in the thirty-third year, after three months.

FRAGMENT 110

“He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives.” Whom does he call captives? Is it those who had earlier been taken captive and bound by the devil, whom Christ set free from captivity when he came and brought down the rebel and boastful tyrant, Satan? He calls the same people “blind” and “broken.” For Christ himself flashed the light of the mind on those whose understanding was darkened. He also released from the bonds of sin those who were “broken and crushed in heart,” that is, those crushed by the weight of sin, or those who are humble in spirit. To these he also proclaims “the acceptable year of the Lord.” And what year is this, in which the Savior’s preaching took place, if not the one in which the true Lamb was offered for the sin of the world?

FRAGMENT 111

“But he, wanting to justify himself, said.” The lawyer had been praised by the Savior for giving a good answer. Even so, he burst out with arrogance. He counted no one as his neighbor, as though no one were a match for him in righteousness. For he thought that only the righteous person is neighbor to the righteous, and only the lofty to the lofty, someone who rivals him in virtue. He did not know that this destroys righteousness: not doing out of love what one does. So he is found lacking in love, both toward God and toward his neighbor.

FRAGMENT 112

13:6 “A certain man had a fig tree planted.” [Others explain his coming three times like this: first, the time of Moses and Aaron; second, the time when

Joshua son of Nun lived, and after him the judges; third, after these, the time when “the prophets until John” the Baptist appeared.] Israel was fruitless in its seasons. As far as God’s purpose was concerned, worship carried out in shadows and types could not be accepted. They came to spiritual worship altogether fruitless, and so Israel was cast away. A fourth time can also be understood: the time of the incarnation. In it he pricks Israel and digs around it, warming it so that he might make them fervent in spirit. But since they stayed fruitless even after so many threats, the fig tree was cut out and the Gentiles were grafted in “to their root.” The root remained. Or the vinedresser should be understood as some angel commanded by God to take charge of Jerusalem, which is itself compared to a fruitless fig tree. Let me then set out the account briefly. The fig tree is Jerusalem [or the synagogue of the Jews, or humanity]. The “master of the house,” whose fig tree it was, is God, and the Savior himself. The “vinedresser” is the Son of God. That he came “a third time” means that he came through Moses, through the prophets, and through himself. Or the first year is the one in which he first gave Adam a command, saying, “from every tree in paradise you shall eat for food,” and so on. The second is the one in which he gave commandments to Israel in the law through Moses. The third is the one in which he himself, in person, gave the perfect law in the gospel. Or he means this: the first year is the time of Moses and Aaron; the second is the time of Joshua son of Nun and the judges; the third is the time when “the prophets [until] John” appeared; and the fourth is the time of the incarnation, in which he himself, through the gospel, announced the good news of the kingdom of the heavens to all.

FRAGMENT 113

9:10 But Matthew says ... “flee to the other.”

FRAGMENT 114

9:12 But according to the higher sense ... feeding each tribe.

FRAGMENT 115

9:18 He asks, not out of ignorance ... they have taken up symbolic [features] of him.

FRAGMENT 116

He inquires of the disciples ... will enter into it.

FRAGMENT 117

9:23 In another way someone denies himself ... in doing right, [the one] being saved.

FRAGMENT 118

9:27 These things refer to Peter and James ... of his transfiguration.

FRAGMENT 119

But if one must look into something a little more closely ... within the perfect only.

FRAGMENT 120

9:28 And so, in order that, taking it up again ... and the holy passion.

FRAGMENT 121

For since in six days ... being seen by the one who sees.

FRAGMENT 122

Not bearing the power of the voice ... to appear there to many.

FRAGMENT 123

9:30 Origen on the words, "Behold, two men were talking with him": ... for whom it has been prepared, was said on account of these.

FRAGMENT 124

9:34 But the voice from the cloud ... from where they had come.

FRAGMENT 125

9:37 But one must look at these things more loftily ... in the branches of such a faith.

FRAGMENT 126

9:44 By whom, then, is he going to be handed over? ... upon us the light of God.

FRAGMENT 127

9:47 Since the Son is inseparable ... and a child free of evil.

FRAGMENT 128

9:48 For such as the child is from its birth ... has become toward the children.

FRAGMENT 129

11:51 Therefore, of Elizabeth and the child ... the blood with the blood.

FRAGMENT 130

We find Zacharias in the books of Kingdoms ... the father of the father.

FRAGMENT 131

14:18 That, then, is the general sense of the parable. But you might also take it differently, according to the passage. As far as we are human ... “among gods.”

FRAGMENT 132

17:34 Both can also be signified ... as unworthy, being sent away.

FRAGMENT 133

18:24 Observe that he did not shut out the rich man altogether ... and the things of what is called.

FRAGMENT 134

19:29 The two disciples, that is, Peter and Paul ... into Jerusalem.

FRAGMENT 135

23:17 Why did they need to release ... because of the people, Jonathan.

FRAGMENT 136

It is likely that, since a truce had just been made ... such a thing was customary for them.

FRAGMENT 137

23:39 Matthew, passing over it, said ... “in the [δεῖσιν].”

FRAGMENT 138

Matthew 13:44 Likeness and parable, the difference ... the word of the sowing.

FRAGMENT 139

Matthew 13:44 According to another interpretation it would be ... in his wishes.

FRAGMENT 140

Matthew 13:45 Those who [do] not [speak] about pearls ... the knowledge of Christ.

FRAGMENT 141

Matthew 13:47 Further, the dragnet is the one from the ancients ... the furnace of fire.

FRAGMENT 142

Matthew 20:1 These five intervals ... is referred to the kingdom of God.

FRAGMENT 143

Perhaps, then, the whole life of human beings ... the wage of salvation.

FRAGMENT 144

Through which the mark of the kingdom seems to me ... is referred to the kingdom.

FRAGMENT 145

But this one alone, besides the three ... the prophetic writings, the evangelists.

FRAGMENT 146

It is not unprofitable to set alongside ... by himself, a son of God.

FRAGMENT 147

[So also Origen, who says that] ... all nourishment of the life of the world.

FRAGMENT 148

The word “epiousios” is found in none of the Greeks ... is the bread.

FRAGMENT 149

Historically, after the sending out ... all conceit.

FRAGMENT 150

Indeed, the laws concerning leprosy ... until the leprosy has disappeared.

FRAGMENT 151

What was said by Daniel to one of the elders who accused holy Susanna: “For already the angel of God, having received [the order],” they say, “from God, will split you in two.” He says this will certainly happen to him at the judgment, in keeping with what the Lord said, that “he will cut him in two.” And Ammonius, in interpreting a prophetic passage, etc. . . .

FRAGMENT 152

What difference do these have ... the sayings of the wise and riddles.

FRAGMENT 153

Since prudence is virtue ... the Lord prepared the heavens.

Scholia on the Gospel of Matthew

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 230–250

Brief comments on verses of Matthew's Gospel ascribed to Origen and preserved in Greek manuscripts. They supplement his large Commentary on Matthew, of which only part survives.

MATTHEW 1

Verse 18. "Now the birth of Jesus was like this." Here the evangelist speaks of "birth" (*gennēsis*), but at the beginning of the Gospel he speaks of "genesis." Here he says, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this," and there, "The book of the genesis of Jesus Christ." What, then, is the difference between birth and genesis? And how are both said of Christ? The spoken word is by its own nature intangible and invisible. But when it is written in a book and, as it were, embodied, then it is seen and touched. In the same way the Word of God, without flesh and without body, is neither seen nor written in respect of his deity. But since he became flesh, he is both seen and written. So, as one who became flesh, there is also a book of his genesis. But the question here is not why he said "book" and not "vision" or "word." It is what birth is and what genesis is. They differ. Genesis is the first forming by God. Birth is the succession of one person from another, which comes from the sentence of death because of the transgression. Again, genesis has incorruption and sinlessness, while birth has susceptibility to suffering and sinfulness. So the Lord took sinlessness from genesis, by nature, but did not take on incorruption. And he took susceptibility to suffering from birth, but did not take on sinfulness. In this way he bore the first Adam undiminished in both respects. In Christ, then, genesis would not be a coming from non-being into being. It would be a journey from existing in the form of God to taking the form of a servant. His birth, however, was twofold: like us and beyond us. To be born of a woman is like us. To be born not of the will of flesh or of man, but of

the Holy Spirit, is beyond us. This also announced in advance the birth to come, which he was going to give us from the Spirit.

MATTHEW 7

5 Verse 5. “Do not give what is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before the pigs...” 6 Verse 6. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” So that the disciples would not be ignorant of which of their hearers are dogs or pigs, he says: Seek earnestly from God, and everything will be revealed to you. The beginning of virtue is to know the good through prayer. Next is to know how one must walk the way of virtue. Third is to knock through works so that the door is opened to him. For knocking with the hands signifies this. The truth of the saving teachings is grasped in three ways. First, by careful prayer. Second, by a settled state of the ruling part of the soul in seeking divine things. Third, as regards finding, by [a perceptive] grasp of the depth and certainty of the hidden Scriptures, through exact inquiry. For he says that the Scriptures are opened in this way.

9 Verse 9. “Which of you is the man who, if his son asks him for bread, will hand him a stone?” Verse 10. “And if he asks for a fish, will he hand him a snake?” Consider whether knowledge is food, [without which] one cannot be saved. An example is the exact teaching about how one must eat. A fish is like a relish for the lover of learning: to know the structure of the world, the working of the elements, the beginning, the end and the middle, and whatever else wisdom goes on to say. God does not give a stone instead of bread, which the devil wanted Jesus to eat. Nor does he give a snake instead of a fish, which the Ethiopians eat, being unworthy to eat fish. But how could he call the disciples evil? Even if they followed by their own choice, they still had the changeableness of human nature. Only the Son of God was unchangeable, in both his deity and his humanity. He calls the spiritual gifts “good gifts.” Luke said “Holy Spirit” instead of “good things,” and there is no difference. For the Holy Spirit is himself the good light, and so he gives good things to those who share in him. For those who are exceedingly wicked, because they sin without letting up, wickedness becomes in some way their nature. Satan and the demons are like this. One may call them evil by nature, though they were not created evil by nature. They have hardened through wickedness of their own choosing.

MATTHEW 8

“Many will come from east and west, and will recline at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens.” If the way is narrow and hard, and few find it, by what way will the many enter? For of the broad and roomy way he says that many will enter through it. We answer that the Savior’s saying was spoken because few from Israel were being saved, since not many believed in him. That is why he also said, “Do not be afraid, little flock, because God has been pleased with you.” But “Many will come” was spoken prophetically, as about those from the nations who would believe in him. He says “many” in contrast to those who did not believe after his coming: those from the nations who will recline at table with Abraham and his descendants in the kingdom of the heavens. And in number these are many times more than those from Israel who confess Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW 11

¹¹ “But the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he.” ¹² “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is treated with violence, and violent men seize it.” We say that “least” is spoken about Christ himself [text uncertain]. He is “least” only in the opinion of those who hear. The words “in the kingdom of the heavens” show that in spiritual things, and in everything heavenly and divine, Christ is greater than John. So we will read it this way: “Least.” Then, pausing briefly, we add: “In the kingdom of the heavens he is greater than he.” The kingdom of the heavens is Christ himself, urging all to repentance and drawing them to himself by grace.

MATTHEW 12

¹⁴ “But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.” The closer someone comes to Jesus, the less he takes such counsel. For the counsel of evil men does not come near to Jesus. But when someone goes outside of Jesus, he takes counsel to destroy the light, the good way, the life, the treasure, the one who bore witness to love and peace. Whoever destroys him is called a son of destruction. ¹⁵ “But Jesus, knowing it, withdrew.” For he ought not to stay with the sons of destruction. They lost [him]; we, who did not seek, found him. For he says, “I was found by those who were not seeking me; I became visible to those who were not asking for me.” For he himself came to the lost sheep, but they forgot their own

shepherd. He withdraws, not out of fear of the plot, but to check the wickedness. And so that no one would think he left out of cowardice, he healed them all, showing his all-powerful strength. Yet he holds back from being made public, being gentle and free of vainglory.

MATTHEW 13

^{44a} (6) “The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure,” and so on. On another interpretation, the field is Scripture, planted with many sayings: those of the law, of the writings, and of history. The treasure is the varied meanings contained in them, both plain and hidden. And Christ is the precious treasure of Scripture. Or the field is Christ, in whom Paul says the hidden treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden. So the heavenly realities, and the kingdom of the heavens, are written as in an image in the Scriptures, which are the kingdom of the heavens. And the kingdom is Christ himself, whose knowledge is in us according to our ability. He is found through faith and bought through the virtues. So someone who finds this treasure in the Scriptures hides it, knowing it is not safe to share unspeakable things with just anyone. Having hidden it, he goes off to buy the field at whatever price he wishes. The Hebrews were entrusted with this field first. Whoever receives it from them (in another parable it is a vineyard) makes it his own possession, having sold all that he had. These possessions were evil, in that he no longer lives by them but has been put to death to the whole world and its desires. (7) As for those who have written about pearls, they say there are six kinds of them. The best are those found in shells in India, formed from heavenly dew.

^{44b} The lesser pearls, then, are the inquiries into the law and the prophets and the rest of Scripture. The person who searches hard and sells off his merchandise is looking for Christ, the pearl better than all of these. He counts all these things, good as they are, as loss and as refuse compared with the knowledge of Christ. Again, the dragnet is the weaving together of the ancient words of Scripture, which seemed incomplete until Christ came and brought it to completion. This net is thrown into the sea of this present life. It gathers not different natures but free decisions of the will and choices. So what is gathered from every kind includes both the praiseworthy and the blameworthy, according to their leaning toward the forms of virtue or of vice. Besides this, what is gathered “from every kind” can also point to the calling that comes from every race. The angels will not drag the net to the

shore, that is, to the things outside this life, unless it has been filled with the full number of the nations. When it is full they bring it up. Each of the good ones under the net is restored to its own rank, according to what are here called their “vessels.” The rotten ones they throw outside. The “outside” is the furnace of fire, as the Savior says in what follows: the worthless fish are thrown outside, but the worthless among people go into the furnace of fire.

⁴⁷ Verse 47. Again: “The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet thrown into the sea.” The woven net that the mind can grasp is the Scripture, old and new, made up of many different thoughts. The sea is the tossing life of human beings. The whole varied range of human choices is the calling of every kind of nation. The workers with the net are the Lord and the angels who came to serve him. The vessels are the different dwelling places. The net is not drawn up until the full number of the nations has come in. Or take it this way: the net is the apostolic teaching, which catches without distinction Jews and Greeks, barbarians, Scythians, slaves, free people, wicked and good. The sea is human life. The shore is its end. At the close of the age, when the net is drawn up, the good are separated from the wicked, some to be honored and some to be punished. For not all believers have the same way of life. And so that no one would suppose that the unbelieving and wicked are only thrown outside, he made clear that they are sent on to unending punishment: “And they will throw them into the furnace of fire,” and so on.

MATTHEW 18

⁵ Verse 5. “And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” He urges the faithful to receive, in his name, one such child, or one of such people, the spiritual ones in whom Christ has taken form, according to the humbling of their own spirit. In Luke, the child the Savior pointed out is to be received in his name, so that in the child one receives Christ, who is also in the Spirit. Or “one such” is said because all the spiritual are one. The word also urges us to welcome, in the word of Christ, those who are simple and gentle in heart. He is checking the love of winning among the disciples. When teachers fight, divisions arise and many are caused to stumble, because those who are offended want to draw the hearers to their own side. So he warns beforehand of the punishment that awaits them. This was said as a command: even if you cause one insignificant believer to stumble, the punishment against you will be heavy. By the millstone and the drowning in the sea he points to the unbearable punishment that will come on those who

treat such people with contempt. For here he calls insult a “stumbling block.” I say this because the little ones are easily made to stumble, so that we may not look down on them. The great and perfect person in virtue despises every stumbling block. By warning beforehand and lamenting over such people, he gives them time to repent. When he says “it is necessary,” he does not remove free choice. He shows his foreknowledge of what will certainly happen. That is why he adds “Woe to them,” as to people who stumble willingly. By “punishment” he means people who live in a shameful way.

²⁰ Verse 20. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” ²¹ Verse 21. Then Peter came to him and said, “Lord, how many times will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Two joined together in the name of Christ: body and spirit, not fighting against each other. The body is subjected, and the spirit gives it a share in divine life. And three: [the whole person, spirit, soul and body, he keeps for the coming of Christ]. Or the two may be the two Testaments, when the one who gathers them, the Holy Spirit, is in them. The three would then be law, prophets and Gospel. Or the three may be anger, desire and reasoning. Or they may be calling and election, and the kind of people appointed to first honor along with us. Notice that he did not say “I will be,” but “I am.” For as God, who is everywhere, he is in the midst of those who are joined together through godliness. The power of God, which oversees all things and cannot be divided, becomes divisible for those who are worthy of it. We have authority to forgive offenses committed against us. We do not have it over offenses that reach God, only God himself does. That is why Peter said “against me.” In asking how far one must go in not holding a grudge, he added “seven times” as if it were a great amount. The Lord, pointing to the limitlessness of patient endurance of wrong, said “seventy times seven.” That is: as often as he sins against you, if he repents, forgive him. Christ had set a limit for those who are to be separated from the community, but not for those who repent. So Peter reasonably asks how far one must keep receiving the repentant. [See whether it is possible.] The number six is the number of work and of the making of the world, and seven is the number of rest. The person who loves the things of the world and of matter, and keeps sinning, has the seventh as his limit. Peter understood this, and so he wanted to forgive up to seven. The Lord extends it in the same manner, in proportion, from the unit to tens and hundreds. So the one who has gone

beyond worldly things no longer has forgiveness of sins, for forgiveness belongs to things here, whether it comes slowly or quickly.

MATTHEW 21

^{33a} Verse 33. "There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, built a tower, leased it to farmers, and went away," and so on. The parable calls God the Father the householder, who showed great care for the Jews from the beginning. The vineyard, in the simple sense, is the first people, that is, Israel, planted by God in the land of promise. The fence is the law, which did not allow them to mix with the nations. The winepress is the altar, or the place of the drink offerings. The tower is Zion, or heaven. The farmers are the elders of the people, the wise men, and the teachers of each age. The householder went away when he no longer appeared to them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire. Or it means the patience of God, who did not immediately demand from the Jews the punishment for their offenses. The demand for fruit is the life lived according to the law. Their season is the demand made by the prophets. The first and second servants who suffered ill treatment are the prophets sent at different times. Of these, they beat one, like Micaiah, when Zedekiah struck him on the cheek. Another they killed, like Zechariah, between the temple and the altar.

^{33b} Another they stoned, like Zariou, the son of Jodae the priest. Perhaps the vineyard is the kingdom of God, and its mysteries in the law and the prophets and the rest of the study of nature. The fruits are the virtuous life in character. The fence is the rational place, and the letter, so that outsiders cannot look in on the hidden mysteries. The winepress is the depth that receives the fruits of the soul, [and which sets everything toward battle; the text is unclear]. The tower is also the carefully distinguished discourse about God. [The temple is that of the divine temple within it; the text is unclear.] The farmers are those first entrusted with the oracles of God. [He goes away from them to occupy them with his own affairs,] giving them the opportunity, from what he himself planted, fenced, dug and built, to bear fruit. The season of fruits, which the householder knows, perhaps does not mean putting out leaves, or blossoming, or forming sour grapes, or being harvested. [Such are those of infancy, or of the completion of the word, or of progress in virtue, or of the beginning.] But the fruits are those of love, joy, peace, and

the rest. The servants are the prophets, who demand that the spiritual offerings be brought to God as by priests.

MATTHEW 24

Verse 45. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has put in charge of his household service?” Perhaps he says this to stir people to look for some one rare person. By the doubt in the word “then” he showed how rare such a steward is. And I think he knew no other faithful and wise steward than himself, one who is weighed against the works of the Father, I mean in the matter of humanity. He speaks as if about someone else, veiling it with the excess of his wisdom. He called himself a servant because he took the form of a servant. Consider also whether the word does not press on bishops and teachers who have been entrusted with such things, to deal wisely with each person according to what he deserves. They are to distribute spiritual food with knowledge, at the right time, in the right quantity and of the right quality. He said “Who then?” not because he did not know, but so that people would not pry. The saying also fits anyone who has been trusted with something by God, whether money, or office, or some other power. Second, the steward is required to have faithfulness and wisdom, so that he neither steals what belongs to the master nor fails to manage it properly. Or the servant is the one who has a good conscience toward God and does not fall away from any of his duties. He calls the one who teaches rightly “faithful.” He calls “wise” the one who is not carried along by the foolish talk of the heretics but discerns the precise sense of the word. Or the wise one is the one who is not tempted into sins, because of the variety and changeableness of people. He is the one who knows when to refute, or rebuke, or encourage, or teach; and whom he must give milk to, and whom he must share solid food with.

MATTHEW 25

1a Verse 1. “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.” They say the ten virgins are the senses in each soul, of the inner and the outer person. They have withdrawn from idolatry and worldly desires by receiving the pure word of God, whether in pretense or in truth, and have been made virgins. They are the senses commonly understood, and also those set out in Proverbs, which follow along, as the virtues of the substance of Christ. For this reason, in the

[local passage] it is not that some are foolish and others wise. Rather there is one, and all of them went out to meet him, those who had received the mystery concerning Christ. For they go out from the error of the world, hurrying toward the one who is eagerly hastening toward them. Another comment, from Origen. Virginity is one thing and almsgiving another, and the mind is one thing and the body another; take this into account for the ten virgins. The wise ones, then, are the senses of a person who lives according to reason; the foolish ones are those of a person who lives the opposite way, contrary to right reason. The lamps are the action that is full of every virtue. The oil is the word poured in from the soul, from the one who produces good action. Those who sleep are those who have given up their vital strength. So the wise do not lose their lamps, nor are they careless about keeping the oil. The angels cry out to the sleeping senses and rouse them; that is, the ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are going to inherit salvation. The adornment of the lamps is the gospel use of the senses: of the eyes, in marveling at the one who made them, and in closing so as not to see injustice; of the hearing, [in refusing to accept what is vain], neither a judgment of blood, but the equal word.

^{1b} Taste perceives Christ the Lord. Smell enjoys the fragrance of Christ and of the ointment that was poured out. Touch lays hold of the Word, as John says: "Our hands handled the Word of life." The cry comes at midnight. That was the hour when the sons of Israel went out of Egypt, and the hour when Christ rose from the dead. The cry is the trumpet that raises the dead and brings them out of the tombs. The words "Go out" also have a hidden meaning, for unless we go out, we cannot meet the bridegroom. The lamp of virginity is the light of knowledge. The oil for the lamps is zeal in the knowledge of God and the doing of the commandments. This is what keeps the light within us safe, by keeping the eye single, so that our whole body is filled with light, according to the Lord's word. So the virgins who took up careful zeal for doing the commandments are wise. The careless are foolish, because they spent the time they were given on zeal for empty things. The words "they slept" mean the sleep of death. Midnight shows what is sudden and unexpected, and at the same time frightening. For those who have risen, the fruit of their labors is at hand. But for those who bring nothing with them, because of their indifference toward godliness, the soul begins to grow gloomy, as if it were being put out, and to slide into folly, so

that they imagined they would be saved by the virtue of others. This is why they are rejected, when the others say, "Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you." Those who sell the oil are the teachers, who sell it for the reward of devoted attendance, attention, love of learning and love of hard work. Or the sellers are the prophets, apostles and evangelists, by whom a person is taught and then works virtue.

MATTHEW 27

11a Verse 11. "And the governor questioned him, saying, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'" Pilate asks him as one condemned on a public charge: "Are you the king of the Jews?" He asks either mockingly or in real doubt. Jesus answers quietly, hinting at a "yes," since he is king of all people, with the words "You say so." The high priest had questioned him as a judge, saying, "Tell us whether you are the king," but Pilate asked in a way that declared a verdict. Consider whether "You have said so," spoken to the high priest, exposes his doubt, which he had not noticed, while "You say so," spoken to Pilate, confirms Pilate's own declaration. For he was king of Israel. Jesus did not say a plain "yes," so as not to give Pilate a reasonable ground to condemn him. Because the accusers were so unchangeable, he does not answer them either. And he rightly did not answer Pilate, because Pilate was in doubt whether he should defend himself against unjust accusations, and was of two minds about them. For it was clear that if Jesus had defended himself and shown himself guilty of no charge, the judge would have released him, having found a way to give a favorable verdict. So the governor marveled at him, that though he could have made many defenses, he kept silent. Therefore, as one wanting to release him, Pilate urged him toward this. For Pilate also knew that he had been handed over out of envy. Pilate did not simply marvel, but marveled greatly. Perhaps it was because of Jesus' steadiness and calm in the face of death, and the serenity of his face even in these things. Or he marveled at his more than human patience. It is likely that, since the Jews had just entered into a treaty with the Romans, they thought the favor of a release would be granted to them at the feast. Saul also shows that this kind of thing had happened before, when he granted Jonathan to the people. Pilate said this thinking they would ask for either the innocent man or one guilty of countless charges, as though they were righteous people.

11b For Pilate knew that they had no clear proof against him. In some very old copies I found that Barabbas himself was also called Jesus. In those copies

Pilate's question read like this: "Which of the two do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For it seems that "Barabbas" was the robber's family name, which is translated "son of a teacher." Taken together, then, the name Barabbas means "son of our teacher." And whose son are we to suppose this notorious robber was, if not the son of the man of blood, the murderer from the beginning? Even to this day those who have learned from him how to murder choose him over the one who gives life to people, our Lord Jesus Christ. While Jesus was being judged by Pilate, he sent a message to Pilate's wife. By his silence he would astonish Pilate with his courage, and by the message Pilate would know that he was judging not a man but God. [The text is corrupt here.] Pilate himself did not see the dream, either so that he would not keep silent about the dream, or because he would not have been believed, or because he was unworthy, or so that he might hear what the woman had suffered and sympathize. For she not only saw the dream but suffered many things, and in the night, which made it more fearful. Besides, the dream was a work of Providence. It did not say what the matter was, but it showed that it was given not to keep Jesus from suffering but to save the woman. Blessed is the woman who has such suffering in dreams, so that she may not suffer beyond measure. [The text is unclear here.] But if this woman is a symbol of the Church that was once ruled by Pilate and is no longer under his hand because of faith in Christ, then — for the woman was a foreigner. [The text breaks off here.]

^{45a} Verse 45. "From the sixth hour darkness came over all the land until the ninth hour." The prophet Zechariah also spoke about this darkening. He says: "On that day there will be no light. There will be cold and frost for one day. And that day is known to the Lord. It will be neither day nor night, and toward evening there will be light." He speaks of the darkness as the darkening of those who lay hands on the light. For just as there was darkness for the Egyptians and light for the sons of Israel, so now there is light for the Church, but for the Jews a darkness of three days: the darkness of the Father's light, of the radiance of Christ, of the shining of the Holy Spirit. And since man was made on the sixth day, it is likely that he also fell in the sixth hour. Perhaps for this reason the one who suffers for the salvation of men was hung up at the sixth hour. This is the sign that he had promised earlier to give to those who asked for it, when he said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign," and what follows; and, "When you lift up the Son of

Man, then you will know that I am he.” For it is far more wonderful that these things happened while he was nailed to the cross than while he walked on the earth. The strangeness was not only in this. What they were seeking came from heaven, and it came over the whole inhabited world. That had never happened before, except in Egypt alone, when the Passover was also being kept.

^{45b} For those things were a type of these. So that they could not say that what happened was an eclipse, it happened at a time when an eclipse could not occur. [The text is corrupt here.] It came in the middle of the day, so that all who live on the earth would learn that it was daytime everywhere in the world. A philosopher among the Greeks named Phlegon also mentions this darkness, as something that happened marvelously on the fourteenth day of the moon. At that time an eclipse cannot naturally occur, since the sun is far away, as far apart as from the beginning of the sky to its end. For eclipses happen when these two lights come close to each other. An eclipse of the sun happens when the moon, at the time of conjunction, passes under it, not at full moon, when the moon is at the opposite side. This happened as though creation were mourning at what had been done, and so showing that, since this drunken outrage was committed by the Jews, their mind was darkened and the sun of the mind withdrew from them. For if they thought he had done this, they ought to have believed and feared. If they thought it was not he but the Father, they ought even then to have been pierced to the heart. For that darkness was the work of one who is angry, and a sign of what was going to seize those who fight against God and shed innocent blood. This is why it happened after the whole outrage, when they were sated with their mockery and had said everything they wished.

MATTHEW 28

Verse 18. “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” Understand the words “All authority has been given to me” and what follows as referring to the incarnation. But if you also consider it in relation to the divinity, then you will take “authority has been given to me” to mean “room has been made for it.” “Given” means “brought to me”; I have been entrusted with authority over free will. Life first had room among the things above, and now also among the things below. So baptize them with confidence into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. There is one who saves, and one salvation. There is one who lives: the Father,

the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is one, not by a blending together of the three, but in one being; yet there are three persons, each complete in every respect, and fitting together. The Father begot by nature, and so the one begotten was of the same being as himself. God is not a body. Therefore God, who is without a body, did not beget by [*ἀσταπεύειν*: the word is uncertain, perhaps “emission” or “flowing”] or by movement, or by any such thing as is seen in bodies. The begetting is real and personal: the Son was brought forth from the being of the Father.

Scholia on the Gospel of Luke

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 233–250

Short comments (scholia) on Luke's Gospel, kept in a Venice manuscript (cod. Venet. 28) and attributed to Origen. They are brief notes on the verses of the Gospel rather than a continuous commentary.

BOOK 1

LUKE 1

^{1a} Verse 1. "Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the matters that have been fully established among us." Since it was a presumptuous undertaking for a mere man to write down God's teaching and words, Luke fittingly defends himself in the preface. Among the ancient people many claimed to prophesy, but some of them were false prophets and some were truly prophets. There was a gift, the discernment of spirits, and by this gift the true prophet was distinguished from the false. So it is now in the new covenant: many have wished to write Gospels. But the approved money-changers did not accept everything; they chose certain ones out of them. Perhaps the word "undertook" also carries a hidden accusation against those who came rashly, and without the gift, to the writing of Gospels. Matthew did not "undertake"; he wrote, moved by the Holy Spirit. So too Mark, and John likewise, and Luke. But the Gospel entitled "according to the Egyptians" and the one entitled "of the Twelve": their writers "undertook" the task. The Gospel according to Thomas is also circulated. Basilides, too, has dared to write a Gospel "according to Basilides." Many, then, have undertaken it, including the one according to Matthias and several others. But the Church of God approves only the four. He did not say simply "believed" but "fully established," bearing witness that what is said cannot be overturned. He said "matters" (things actually done), overthrowing the heresy of those who say that what was done through the Savior happened only in appear-

ance, and his incarnation too. By speaking of “the matters fully established,” he also shows his own state of mind.

^{1b} He was fully convinced and had no doubt at all whether things were so or not. That he received his information from eyewitnesses and those who heard with their own ears, he plainly confessed when he said: “Just as they handed them down to us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.” He asserts that he followed everything closely from the start, not just some of the things mentioned but all of them. Some may reasonably suppose that he wrote the Gospel for a certain Theophilus, one of the believers, so fervent in spirit and so insatiable for the Lord’s deeds and words, whom what is now written would make more secure. Another says: if we are all such that we are loved and cherished by God, we are “Theophilus,” that is, God-loved. And no weak person could be a Theophilus. Every Theophilus is “most excellent,” having the strength and power that come from God and his Word; and so he will come to know the certainty of the teachings in which he was instructed. Luke therefore promises firmness of knowledge, so that what Theophilus received by hearing he may now also meet in writing and so keep his faith more securely. (40) In Exodus it is written that the people saw the voice of the Lord, though a voice is not seen but heard. This was to show, paradoxically, that God’s voice is seen by those by whom it is seen. In the Gospel, however, it is not the voice that is seen but the Word, who is greater than the voice. Hence: “Just as they handed down to us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.” For if having seen the Lord in the body were what it meant to be an eyewitness of him,

^{1c} then Pilate was an eyewitness of the Word when he condemned him, and so was Judas the betrayer, and all who said, “Crucify, crucify him.” So knowing the Word must be understood in the sense in which the Savior said, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father who sent me.” Luke also teaches us here, almost unnoticed, a good lesson: for some matters of contemplation the end is contemplation itself, but for others the end is action. By “eyewitnesses” he indicates the contemplative side, and by “servants” the practical side. You can also take “servants of the Word” another way: either the Word of teaching, which the Savior handed on, or the very Word of God, whom the disciples served by being present with him. Luke shows his own state of mind: he was fully convinced and had no doubt at all whether things were so or not. This happens with those who believe firmly. The

Apostle too says of the firm: “that you be rooted and grounded in the faith.” For nothing brings full conviction as mind and reason do. Sight does not give full conviction, since matters are not judged by visible signs and wonders; rather, it is by reason that we judge which things are true and which are false. He says “matters” because Jesus did not play out his coming in the flesh merely in appearance, as the children of the heretics claim; being truth, he carried out these matters in truth.

³ Verse 3. “To write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus.” ⁴ So that you may know the certainty of the words in which you were instructed. ⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abia. His wife was one of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous before God. It is reasonable to suppose that Luke wrote the Gospel to a certain Theophilus, who was one of the believers, so fervent in spirit and so eager for the actions and words of the Lord. What was now being written made him more secure still. If all of us are the kind of people who are loved and cherished by God, we are “Theophilus,” lovers of God, or loved by God. And no one who is weak could be a Theophilus. For just as it is written of the people coming out of Egypt, “There was no one weak among their tribes,” so I would say that every Theophilus is “most excellent,” having the strength and power that come from God and his Word. In this way a person will come to know the certainty of the words in which he was instructed, by understanding the word of the Gospel. Luke therefore promises firmness of knowledge, so that what Theophilus received by hearing he may now hold more securely by reading it in writing, and so keep his faith. To be righteous before God is complete praise. For he alone knows the hearts of people. It is possible for someone to appear righteous before people, and yet in the hidden part of the heart not to be so, since he harbors evil thoughts lurking within. The Apostle says something like this: “Their praise is not from people but from God.” For people do not praise worthily, since they see only what appears. But God makes the judgment of the blameworthy and the praise of the praiseworthy according to what each deserves. Verse 6: Walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

⁷ Verse 7: They had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. ⁸ Verse 8: While he was serving as priest in the order of his division before God, ⁹ Verse 9: According to the custom of the priesthood, it

fell to him by lot to burn incense, and he went into the temple of the Lord.

¹⁰ Verse 10: And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense. Perhaps someone will ask: why is “blameless” placed before these people? It would have been enough for them to walk in all the ways and ordinances of God, unless it is possible to walk in all the commandments and yet not blamelessly. My answer to him is this: if that were not so, it would not be said, “Justly you shall pursue what is just.” So when we do the commandments in such a way that we have in our conscience no stain of vainglory, or of pleasing people, or of anything else of that kind, we do the commandments blamelessly.

¹¹ Verse 11: An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² Verse 12: Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ Verse 13: The angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.” ¹⁴ Verse 14. “And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.” (44) The angel appeared to Zechariah by way of condescension. For no one can see an incorruptible body with the eyes of a corruptible body. The angel was seen standing on the right side of the altar, because he was about to announce good news to him. “Zechariah was troubled when he saw him.” A dazzling appearance, when it shows itself to a human being, is hard to bear. Even so, the angel turns Zechariah back from his alarm and revives him, saying, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah.” (45) Know that God does not appear to everyone, and neither do the angels. They appear to those who have a pure heart and are worthy to see. For God is found by those who do not test him, and he shows himself to those who do not disbelieve him. Of the same. All who saw angels were afraid. They feared that the angels had come to take their souls, as Manoah also says. So the angel, to relieve Zechariah’s anguish, said, “Do not be afraid.” For not only will you not die (where there is grief and tears), but you will live and have children, and you will have great joy. For Elisabeth will bear you a son, and among those born of women none has been greater than he. Then he says, “And many will rejoice at his birth.” For even if not all the Jews did, many rejoiced at the coming of the forerunner, who announced the visit of the Savior. (46) In the spiritual reading, this is the silence of the Prophets among the people who belonged to God of old. For God no longer speaks to them, but the Word who was in the beginning has

passed over to us. With us he is not silent; with them he has fallen silent. For this reason the prophet Zechariah is silent. As for the making of signs, (47) [the text breaks off here: “remaining mute”].

²² Verse 22. “But when he came out he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.” ²³ Verse 23. “And it happened that when the days of his service were completed, he went away to his house.” ²⁴ Verse 24. “After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she hid herself for five months, saying:” ²⁵ Verse 25. ““This is what the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”” ²⁶ Verse 26. “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,” ²⁷ Verse 27. “to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” Why was he making signs to them? Having heard beforehand that something desirable was going to happen to him, he did not hurry before the right time; after this he [came] to the husband [the text here is unclear]. In the same way the good things also began with women, so that women might be ashamed of their weakness, put off womanish ways, and become zealous for the lives of these blessed people. Verse 43. “And why is this granted to me, that the mother [of my Lord should come to me]?” and so on. Of the same. Elizabeth speaks in harmony with her son. She says she is unworthy of the visit of the Mother of God, just as John said he was unworthy of standing before Christ. “What great good,” she says, “have I done, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” She calls the one who is still a virgin a mother, anticipating the outcome in prophetic speech. By divine arrangement, then, the testimony was brought to Elizabeth. This was so that John’s testimony to the Lord from the womb might be confirmed through his own mother Elizabeth. It was also so that Mary, [after] the angel’s voice, seeing Elizabeth and the marvelous child in her, might through this believe the greater thing, I mean the seedless birth from the virgin herself. Elizabeth’s word agrees with this faith when she says, “And blessed is she who believed that there will be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” For through these words the virgin was made more certain in faith. She was called blessed because she believed, with the angel announcing it beforehand and her relative prophesying in the same way. Of the same. Let us now look at the virgin’s prophecy.

^{46a} Verse 46. “My soul magnifies the Lord.” We need to understand how my soul magnifies the Lord. If we live worthily, in the image of the one who created us, and become like the original as far as we can through good works, then we magnify the Lord in words, in deeds, and in thoughts. A person makes him smaller in proportion to the evil that is in him. So Mary’s soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. First her soul magnified him, and then her spirit rejoiced. We should look through the Old and New Scripture to see whether, when sinners’ births are described, it is anywhere said, “The time was fulfilled for her to give birth.” No one, I think, would find it. It is said only where the child being born is righteous. This is also so with the rest (54). Elisabeth was a prophetess. She had not heard of the revelation given to her husband, yet by the Holy Spirit she declared that the child would be given the name the angel had spoken, and she said he would be called John. When people wanted to learn the name from the father too, they made signs to him, as if he could not hear or speak. He took a writing tablet and wrote the child’s name, in agreement with his wife, so that everyone was amazed at this. Then it says, “His mouth was opened.” Evidently, after he had written on the tablet that “John shall be his name,” the bound voice was released. He received back his tongue, no longer bound by unbelief as before, but blessing God and prophesying what is recorded. It is superfluous to say “and the rest.” As I think, our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the whole company of his holy prophets and righteous ones, also enjoyed the presence of Christ.

^{46b} For if he made peace through the blood of his cross, both for things on earth and things in heaven, as the divine Apostle says, why hesitate to accept that his visit to the fathers, and his going down to Hades, also accomplished this, because of his unsearchable mercy? Even if this has happened only now, it was announced long ago. It was impossible for those words not to come to fulfillment. For he confirmed the promises with an oath, because of their unchangeable nature, so that they would certainly come to pass. And now the faithful are delivered without fear from the hand of their spiritual enemies. (57) Often some are delivered, and the rest. (58) The angel does not go to the synagogue of the Jews in Jerusalem, to the priests, scribes and Pharisees. Instead he finds shepherds living in the fields and keeping watch by night over their flock. It is to these that he announces the good news of the Savior’s birth. They were unpretentious men, who zealously followed the old

way of life of the patriarchs. For these too were shepherds, and they ran and reported it to others. The others were corrupted by envy and would have hidden the mystery of the world's salvation. (59) For he alone opened the womb, born of a virgin. Nothing had touched that womb before Christ. All the firstborn, even if they are firstborn, do not themselves open the womb first; the husband does. (60) Perhaps he has left them? In their distress, then, they looked for the Son of God, and in looking for him they did not find him among their relatives, for he was above their kinship.

LUKE 2

Verse 49. "Did you not know that I must be in the things of my Father?" As to the wording itself, let us arm ourselves against the godless heresies. They say that the Creator is not the Father of Jesus Christ, and that the God of the law and the God of the temple is not the Father of Christ. Let the followers of Valentinus be ashamed when they hear his voice saying, "I must be in the things of my Father," if they accept the text. Were they so senseless as not to understand what he meant by "in the things of the Father," instead of "in the temple"? Or perhaps he hints at some mystery: if any of you belongs to the Father, does he have Christ in himself? For he sees a living temple of the Father, the beautiful and good one, as better than that temple. He went out from that temple, saying, "Your house is left to you," and he went away to the temple of the Father, the Churches everywhere. Verse 51. "And he was subject to them," and so on. In the prophetic book that was proclaimed among the Jews alone, only [the reigns] of the kings of the Jews are recorded. For it says, "The vision which Isaiah saw against Judea and against Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, and Jotham, and Ahaz, and Hezekiah." I know of no other king recorded in the time of that prophecy than the king of Judea. In some prophecies the king of Israel is mentioned as well. But when John was about to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel, the record names not only Herod, king of Judea, nor only Tiberius of the Romans.

LUKE 3

¹If only those from the nations were going to be saved, and salvation were completely shut off from the sons of Israel, it would have been enough to say, "In the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar." But since those from Galilee, and from Ituraea and Trachonitis, and from Abilene must also believe, these realms are recorded as well. He also mentioned the high priests

Annas and Caiaphas, to show that these men were high priests from the time when John came preaching. They began at that time and remained in the high priesthood until the Lord's passion. By the same author. Never before did a word of God come to any of the prophets in the wilderness. But since many children were going to belong to the desolate woman rather than to her who has the husband, therefore the word of God came to John in the wilderness. Otherwise he would have been preaching in the wilderness for nothing. "And he came into all the region around the Jordan." Where else should the Baptist go than to the region around the Jordan? Then, if anyone wished to repent, he would at once have the river at hand. For the river of God truly is coming down: the true water, the saving water. "And he preaches," it says, "a baptism for the forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness of sins for whom? For the one who no longer sins. Then he brings in Isaiah crying out this very thing. For what? [It says,] "A voice of one crying in the wilderness." He says this as though Isaiah himself were hearing John's words. For John was chosen for the mission, and was the perfect one among the prophets. And since John was the forerunner of the Word, he is rightly called a voice, not a word. For the voice comes before the word. The phrase "Prepare the way" [continues in the next section].

2... on the one hand not containing the whole of the Gospel, but on the other bringing in the beginning of the New Testament. It brings in three things, and so on.

BOOK 2

LUKE 1

²² Verse. See the type in Zechariah. For they have cast out the word [from themselves], and they cannot give an account of anything in the word of the law or the prophets. So they remain mute and without reason. ⁶³ Verse 63. "And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, 'John is his name.'" Zechariah is interpreted "memory of God," and John "the one who shows." A person remembers what is absent, but shows what is present. For this reason the parents of this child could not bear to call him Zechariah, and wanted to name him John instead. He was not merely going to remember God as though God were absent. He was going to point with his finger at God present, and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The all-holy Virgin knew that he was not Joseph's child. Yet in front of these people she approves her betrothed, be-

cause of the suspicion of the Jews, who supposed he had been born of fornication. More simply, then, it could be said that the Holy Spirit honored him with the title of father, and so on (75), [lest he had left them]. But the Lord set aside a human answer and gave a divine one, hinting that he was God in the flesh. Or you may understand it this way. The mountains and hills are the opposing powers, which were brought low by Christ's coming. The valleys are people, who have been filled with good works. "All the crooked things have become straight," for each one of us was crooked. So when Christ comes into the soul, the crooked things become straight. Our life was once rough, and our speech uneven. But when the Lord came, he made everything smooth.

LUKE 3

¹Verse 1. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." In the prophetic word, which was proclaimed only among the Jews, only the kingship of Judea is recorded. "The vision," it says, "which Isaiah saw in the days of Uzziah and Jotham and Ahaz, who reigned over Judah." But the mystery of the Gospel was about to be proclaimed in the whole world. So the rule of Tiberius Caesar is recorded, since he was thought to be king of the whole world. If only those from the nations were going to be saved, and salvation were shut off from all the sons of Israel, it would be enough to mention only Tiberius. But since those from Galilee, Ituraea and Trachonitis must also believe, these kingdoms, or tetrarchies, are recorded. Never before did a word of God come to any of the prophets in the wilderness, but only now, because of a certain mystical vision. For the children of the wilderness were going to be more numerous, that is, the children of the Church from the nations, than the children of her who has the husband. I mean the law of the Jewish synagogue. The statement "A word of God came to John" means a command.

³Verse 3. "And he came into all the region around the Jordan." (76) Where should the Baptist go about, if not into the region around the Jordan? Then, if anyone wanted to repent, he would at once have the river at hand. Jordan is interpreted "descending." And truly the river of God is a descending one: the true water, the saving water. ⁵Verse 5. (77) They say that the viper, when she conceives, kills the male by whom she conceives. Then the offspring grows and kills the one who conceived it, and so comes out into the light, tearing through its mother's belly, as a kind of penalty for the father

who was destroyed. The Jews are like this too, since with their own hands they destroyed their spiritual fathers and teachers. This is discussed more fully in Matthew.

LUKE 4

9 Verse 9. “And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the wing of the temple.” See how deceitfully, by using the Scriptures, he wants to bring down the glory of the Lord. He makes it seem that the Lord needs angelic help, and that he is about to stumble unless angels help him. But the use of the psalm was not said about Christ. For the master of the angels has no need of angels. I say the opposite to you, devil: unless Jesus helps the angels, they stumble. And you fell from heaven for this reason, because you considered yourself self-sufficient and not in need of Jesus’ help. So that you may know that what is written was not said about Jesus, but is applied to a righteous man, listen. For it is written: “The one who dwells in the help of the Most High will lodge in the shelter of the God of heaven.” This fits a righteous man better than the Son of God. And again: “There shall fall at your side a thousand, and ten thousand,” and what follows. These words too are applied to the righteous man.

40 Verse 40. As the sun was setting, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. And he laid his hands on each one of them and healed them. They brought them around sunset, either because they were ashamed to do it by day, or because they feared the Pharisees and were busy with other matters. Or perhaps they thought it was not permitted to heal on the Sabbath. For the evangelist pointed out that he was teaching them on the Sabbath. For this reason, around sunset, their relatives brought those who were ill, and he healed them.

LUKE 7

Verse 22. Taking it historically: after the little bird is sent away, the one who has been cleansed first washes his clothes, then shaves off all his hair, and after this bathes in water. After that comes the statement, “He will be clean.” The clothes could be a way of life that was not altogether badly woven, since he would have put them off anyway. The hair is the dead growths that have sprouted in the soul. [Samuel’s requests were opposed to these], and they were also counted among the Nazirites and even their disciples. For iron never came upon the head of the Nazirites. Everything they do prospers as they go

about it, so that not even a leaf of theirs falls off as they bear fruit. Then he puts off the defilement from the body with water, and baptism is signified in this. After this he becomes worthy of the camp, but he does not enter his own house for seven days, and not until his head is shaved again. [The finer points of doctrines, and to lay aside knowledge, are the man's sins; and by the eyebrows is meant every kind of conceit.] Why must the leper's head be uncovered? So that he may be recognized, and so that those who wander may not share in the cleansing. The covering of the mouth shows that he must condemn himself to silence until he returns and is cleansed. According to some, again, when the Law has named the man who is leprous all over, it cleanses him. This shows that God hates what is mixed and variegated. Going further, the Law shows this more clearly in the words: "You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed." And, "a garment woven of two materials." And, "You shall not yoke your cattle with one of a different kind." Everywhere it prefers simplicity, which is what is seen in the man who is leprous all over.

LUKE 8

¹⁶ Verse 16. No one lights a lamp and covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed. He puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light.
¹⁷ Verse 17. For there is nothing hidden that will not become visible, and nothing concealed that will not be known and come to light. [Something is missing in the text here:] ... has, it will be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him. Whoever wants to apply the lamp to most of Jesus' disciples will be put to shame by what is said about John: that he was the lamp, burning and shining. But the lamp of the body is the eye, which refers to the mind in each person. Yet the words "Let your lamps be burning" were also spoken to all the disciples of Jesus. So the one who has lit a lamp in a rational soul must not hide it, but set it on the lampstand. Moses put a symbol of this lampstand in the tent of testimony. Let the fellow servants be given their measure of grain by the faithful and wise servant. But let them see the rays of the lamp that sits on the lampstand, that is, on the Church of all. Nor do people put the lamp under the bed, where someone rests, nor under any other vessel. For the one who does this takes no thought for those who are coming into the house. The lamp must be set for them by those who kindle the mind within themselves with the true light, the bright Word, and the rays of wisdom. The

mind has the nature in which the Creator made it, like a lamp that needs [to be kept most sharp-sighted in the soul by those who care for it], and it shares in him who said, “I have come as light into the world.” For those who light the lamp and set it on the lampstand so that it shines for everyone in the house will urge those in the house, as they see the brightness of the lamp, to kindle their own lamps as well.

³⁸ Verse 38. But Jesus sent him away, saying: ³⁹ Verse 39: “Go back to your house, and tell all that God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him. He sends him to his house. The man did not have the capacity to sit, clothed, at the feet of Jesus and take it in. And although he wanted to be with him, since the people of the surrounding region could not bear the presence of Jesus, he still took thought for the salvation of those there who were able to receive it. So he sent away the one who had sat at his feet long enough, so that he would teach what God had done for him. There could be some who would be hearers and disciples of such a man, who could not take in more but proclaimed from the few things he had received. You could also apply the account to the nature of the man outside Israel, for whose sake Jesus sails over to the country of the Gadarenes, and to whom Jesus came out onto the land. “He did not wear a garment,” it says, the man. For he had not put on what covers his shamefulness. “And he did not stay in a house.” For he was not, like Jacob, a plain man dwelling in a house. That is why Jesus sent this very man away, saying, “Return to your house.” “And he stayed among the tombs,” not with the living but with the dead. “Now there was,” it says, “a herd of many pigs feeding on the mountain.” But perhaps pigs do not feed on the mountain; [text uncertain: “μετὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη” — “the herd rushed down with the cliff”?] Is it not perhaps that the pleasure-lovers, friends of the belly and of what lies below the belly, feed where the tombs are, close to the legion of demons? And in his goodness Jesus destroys the herd of demons in the water along with the pigs. Perhaps through the demons he also blocks the breathing of the evils of those who love pleasure and love the body, and such a person comes to his senses. If anyone is of sound mind, he is with Jesus; but the one who is beginning to be sound in mind is at his feet.

⁴⁸ Verse 48: Then he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” Now the more advanced soul, which has served the Word of God well, has boldness to come to the head itself. And the head of Christ is God.

So she can pour ointment on it and make a sweet fragrance for the glory of God. God is glorified through the fragrance of the life of the righteous. But the less perfect woman, the less perfect soul, turns to the feet and to the lowlier things, and we are close to her. For we have not even repented of our sins. Where are our tears? Where is our weeping, so that we might at least be able to come to the feet of Jesus? For we are not yet able to reach the head itself. It is a good thing, after sins, to bring the fragrance of repentance, so that someone might be in second place, the one who anoints the feet and not the head. That is, the one who does not touch the more perfect and higher things, but the outermost and last.

⁵² Verse 52: And all were weeping and beating their breasts for her. But he said, “Do not weep. She has not died, but is sleeping.” ^{53a} Verse 53: And they laughed at him, knowing that she had died. Such, then, is the history of the miracle. But perhaps we should also look at it in a finer and higher way. Let the simpler and more guileless wonder at the great deeds of God in these terms, for even things understood bodily build people up. But let those who are able to move on to see that these things happened to those people as a type, and were written for our sake, pray to God and ask for a word that makes these things clear too. Why does Jesus go first to the daughter of the synagogue ruler, and not to the woman with the flow of blood, and yet she, meeting him on the way, is healed first? The Son of God came first to the synagogue of the Jews and found it sick and dead. For the transgressions of Israel made it die. But the woman with the flow of blood, the one on the road, full of uncleanness, flowing not just at the time of separation but always bleeding and sick, she will believe in the Son of God before that one. And while he goes off to the other, she wants to touch the fringe of his garment. And Luke added what Matthew did not say: that the daughter of the synagogue ruler was twelve years old, and the woman with the flow of blood had been bleeding for twelve years.

^{53b} So the woman began to bleed at the very time that the girl was born. For the synagogue is free from suffering as long as it lives, and the same limit of time marks the end of the one and the beginning of this one’s salvation. The girl dies at twelve years, and after twelve years of suffering this woman believes and is healed. She had not been able to be healed by any of the physicians. For many physicians promised to heal those from the nations. If you look at those who practice philosophy and profess to teach truth, they are

physicians who try to heal. But she had spent all that she had on them, and she could not be healed by any of the physicians. She touched the fringe of Jesus' garment in faith, and she was healed. If we consider our faith in Jesus Christ, and understand how great the Son of God is, and whom it is that we have touched, we will see that, compared with the fringes that are in him, what we have touched is only a fringe. This fringe heals us, and makes us hear from Jesus, "Daughter, your faith has saved you," and so we are healed. And the daughter of the synagogue ruler will rise. For when the full number of the nations has come in, then all Israel will be saved.

LUKE 9

^{26a} Verse 27. "But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." Some apply this to Peter, James and John, who went up with Christ onto the high mountain. They did not taste death before they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom, that is, in the glory of his transfiguration. But if we must say something more careful about standing with Jesus and about tasting death: there were some standing where Jesus was, firmly fixed in soul beside him. Their standing was akin to that of Moses. For Moses says, "I too stood on the mountain forty days and forty nights," having been counted worthy to hear; and, "You also, stand there with me." Few are friends of God, and these are the ones who have their standing in what is good. So the Baptist says of himself, "The friend of the bridegroom, standing, rejoices with joy." Even those who stand beside the Word differ from one another in their standing. So not all who stand beside the Savior, but only some of them, as standing better, do not taste death until they see the Word who made his home among people, and for this reason is called Son of man, coming in his kingdom. For he does not always come in his kingdom. To beginners, who might say that he has no form or beauty, he does not come that way. But to the perfect, in the words of David, he appears fair in beauty beyond the sons of men. So the Word has a most kingly dignity, and it is seen by some of those who stand beside Jesus and have been able to follow him as he goes up the high mountain of his manifestation.

^{26b} This is the mountain to which someone is counted worthy to come, if he is a Peter and has an unshaken faith. Or [sons of thunder] come to it, who also do not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Christ is life. Life's enemy is death, whether the death that comes

through sin or death understood in some other way. Each of us chooses one or the other by what he does. So just as Christ is living bread, his enemy, death, is dead bread. Every rational soul is fed by one of these two. One soul only tastes of it, and another eats of it most of the time. Perhaps those who sin rarely and in small ways only taste death. Those who have taken up virtue do not even taste it, but are always fed on living bread. So for Peter, against whom the gates of Hades did not prevail, it followed that he would not taste death. For a person tastes death when the gates of Hades prevail against him. But for the sons of thunder too, [born of thunder, a human matter(?)], it was impossible to taste death, [since they were] very far from the thunder that was their mother. Here the word “until” points to the pressing time of what is being described. It does not set a limit, as if what is described only happens after the “until”. Compare “And behold, I am with you until the end of the age.” So the apostles also did not taste the death of the mind spoken of above, after they had seen the vision of such great goods. It is said in the Psalms, “Who is the man who will live and not see death?” and “Let death come upon them.” In one of the prophets it is said, “Death, having grown strong, swallowed them up.” And in the Revelation:

26c “Death and Hades follow some.” Perhaps seeing death is the lesser evil, and tasting it is greater. Worse than that is death following someone. And it is worse still when death not only follows, but has already come upon the one it once followed, and overtaken him. Being swallowed up by death seems to me heavier than everything mentioned so far. If you consider what is said and the difference among sins, you will not hesitate, I think, to accept that the Spirit of God, who caused these things to be written in the oracles of God, had something like this in mind. What is shown in seeing the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory? And what does Mark mean by saying “having come in power”? Whether these things shine in our hearts, or are found by those who seek, or come in under our reasonings, we will set them out more clearly. The one who sees and grasps the surpassing greatness of the Word, as he dissolves and refutes all the persuasive arguments of those who are false but profess to teach truth, sees the Son of Man coming in his own kingdom. If he also sees the Word’s own things set out more plainly, he would see him in relation to his kingdom and glory. Such a person would see in himself the kingdom of God having come in power. He would see this as one who is no longer ruled by sin, which reigns in the mortal body of sin-

ners, but is always set under the King, the God of all. His kingdom is in us in potential. But in actuality, as Mark called it, it is found only within the perfect.

²⁸ It happened about eight days after these words that he took Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And it happened, as he was praying, that the appearance of his face became different, and his clothing became white, flashing like lightning. ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with him, who were Moses and Elijah. ³¹ “They appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to fulfil in Jerusalem.” Such, then, is the event and the wonder of the transfiguration. But if I may offer a deeper explanation, it is not for nothing that Mark and Matthew say Jesus went up the mountain with his disciples “after six days.” In six days, a perfect number, the whole world came into being. So the person who rises above all the things of the world, and looks only at what is lasting and eternal, is shown to be taken up by Jesus “after six days.” For whoever has passed beyond these six days sees Jesus, who is transformed for none of those below, transformed before him. The Word appears with different forms, to each as that person is able to receive him. To some he has no form; to others he is beautiful and lovely. To those who do not climb through the higher works, and through them to the high mountain of wisdom, he is understood in a rather simple way and known according to the flesh. To the perfect he is spoken of as God, and by their knowledge he is seen in the form of God. His face shines like the sun for the children of light and of day, since he is revealed as the sun of righteousness. His garments too appear white as light to those whom he has led up to the high mountain. These garments are his words, and the letters of the Gospels which he put on; and I think they also mean what is made clear from the writings of the apostles. So when you see someone who gives an exact account of the doctrine of God concerning Jesus and who makes the whole text of the Gospels clear, do not hesitate to say of him that the garments of Jesus have become white as light. For the one who sees Jesus in this way, Moses and Elijah would appear conversing with Jesus: Moses the law, and Elijah the prophetic word. And the one who has seen the glory of Moses, who has understood the spiritual law as one word pointing to Jesus, and who has understood the wisdom hidden in mystery in the prophets, saw Moses and Elijah in glory when he saw them with Jesus.

³⁵“And a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” ³⁶“And when the voice had come, Jesus was found alone.” The voice from the cloud perhaps says “This is he” to Moses and Elijah, and perhaps also to the disciples. When they heard it, they could not bear this glory. They fell on their faces, humbled under the mighty hand of God, and were very afraid, knowing what was said to Moses: “No man will see my face and live.” When they lifted up their eyes, they saw only Jesus. For I think Moses the law and Elijah the prophecy became one in Jesus the Gospel. They did not remain three, as they had been before. Understand this in a more mystical sense. According to the lofty intention of the letter, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and spoke with Jesus, and then went back to where they had come from. Jesus is not seen to have told them the things of his glory; for those who heard would have been harmed, especially the crowds, seeing the one so glorified being crucified. So the disciples did not hide it out of envy, but out of fear that they would not be believed. They therefore reported it later, after the ascension and after the coming of the Spirit. For when they were filled with boldness and counted worthy of the Spirit, and had the voice of the signs speaking in their support, everything they said was readily accepted.

^{42a} Verse 42. “But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.” We should look at these things from a higher viewpoint, and note that the sufferers, or the relatives of the sufferers, are with the crowds. Jesus comes down to these crowds from the heights, after arranging what concerned the disciples on the mountain. The sufferers could not go up the mountain to him, because diseases held their souls fast. So he comes down to heal them. We must also ask in what kinds of illness the sufferers themselves make the request, believing they will be healed by him or by touching the fringe of his garment. And in what cases others make the request on their behalf: like the centurion for his servant, the royal official for his son, the synagogue ruler for his daughter, the Canaanite woman, and now the man who knelt before him on behalf of his son, who was moonstruck. And we must ask when the Savior heals of his own accord without being asked, as with the paralytic at the sheep pool. If these cases are compared with one another, they will show many teachings to the one who can hear the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery. These concern the different afflictions of souls and the manner of their healing. Just as you rightly

refer every disease and sickness that Christ earlier healed among the crowds to the passions in souls, so reason by analogy and examine the lame and the deaf, and also the case of the moonstruck boy. This affliction comes on at certain times but departs for longer periods, and in those periods the sufferer is no different from a healthy person. Some souls, likewise, are perhaps thought to be healthy in self-control and to live as the Word wishes. Then at times they fall from their apparent standing, overthrown by the passions, in the deceit of this age and in the remaining desires. Speaking spiritually, these people are moonstruck. They are struck down by the spiritual forces of wickedness working through the passions hidden in their inner depths, and they fall into the fire of burning passions;

42b and sometimes into the water, when the king of all the dragons in the waters throws them down. They seemed to breathe freely, but he makes them give way into the depths of the waves of the sea of human life. For this account we may draw on the one who says in the book of Wisdom, about the steadiness of the righteous man: "The talk of the godly is wisdom always," but about those who have been given up: "The fool changes like the moon." In such people you can see impulses that are able to draw to praise those who do not look closely at their instability, so that one might say there is something like a full moon in them, or almost a full moon. But again you might see that what seemed to be light in them is only an imitation. It is not daylight but night light, and it wanes so far that what is seen in them no longer even seems to be light. If then every soul is placed under an angel, this father of the moonstruck boy would be a man asking Jesus as for a son, because the boy could not be cured of the affliction by the lesser word of the disciples. The mute and deaf demon is the irrational impulses toward what seems good, which the Word drives out. The boy himself produced them by an irrational drive, and those watching thought he was doing these things in keeping with the teaching of Jesus. This affliction is hard to cure. What is not done well is strongly held to have been done well. In such people this working is so great that it is compared to a mountain. It needs to be removed from the sufferer through the full faith of the one who heals. All faith is compared to a mustard seed. Faith is despised by men, and is very small, and seems cheap. But when it finds good ground, that is, a soul, it becomes a great tree. So none of the wingless creatures, but only the spiritually winged birds of heaven, can nest in the branches of such faith.

⁴³ Verse 43. "And while everyone was amazed at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples." ⁴⁴ Verse 44. "Put these words into your ears. For the Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men." By whom, then, is he about to be handed over? The Apostle says the Son was handed over by God, when he says: "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all." He gave him up to suffer for the whole world, so that he might take away its sin. You will also say that he was handed over by the devil. It was the devil who handed over Job's yoke of oxen and his donkeys to the captors, then the camels to the horsemen, the sheep to the fire, and his sons and daughters to the wind from the desert. So let it first be said that the Son was handed over by the Father into the hands of men. Then he was handed over by Judas, and by Satan, who entered Judas after the morsel and handed him over as the greater authority behind Judas. But the Father did not spare his own Son, out of his love for humanity and his kindness toward us. Judas did it out of the wickedness of his own choice. When Christ was put to death, he destroyed the devil, who holds the power of death, that is, of sin. For sin is properly death, according to the words: "The soul that sins, it shall die." The rulers took their stand against Christ. But we, who have been helped by his being killed, say: "Let us break their bonds." For we have become like Christ in his death, and so we are no longer under the bonds of our adversaries. Rather, they are laughed at by the Father who lives in the heavens, and mocked by the Lord. For by rising, he has made us like him in his resurrection too. We no longer sit in darkness and the shadow of death, because the light of God has risen upon us.

⁵⁶ Verse 57. As they were going along the road, someone said to him: "I will follow you wherever you go, Lord." ^{58a} Verse 58. And Jesus said to him: "Foxes have dens, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." So if you are ready, like me, to have nowhere to lay your head, then because of my teaching you will choose a life without settled comfort here, in hope of the kingdom of the heavens. You will expect no rest here for anything, but only in the age to come. For my disciples, who practice righteousness, will have tribulation in this world. But the wicked and the deceivers, who are compared to foxes and birds of the heaven, will get ahead in this life, deceiving and being deceived. A loftier reading: when the young man's father had died and was dead, then he was called by Jesus. We must understand that, just as the world has been crucified to Paul and

was dead, because the affairs of the world had died to him, since he no longer regarded them as things that are seen and last only for a time, so for each righteous person the devil has died, who was alive to him while he sinned. “Everyone who commits sin has been born of the devil.” For everyone who sins and fixes his attention on the things here, the wicked father lives. To everyone to whom the wicked one has died, Christ may say: “Follow me.” And perhaps this is what is meant, understood mystically: that our father must be hated by us, if we are to be worthy of Jesus. The words “bury their own dead” are meant only as allegory. For the dead in some sense bury their own dead within themselves, having become the tombs and monuments of those dead.

^{58b} The one who obeys Jesus leaves the dead man behind completely and never touches him again, for he knows that whoever touches a dead body is defiled. Luke says these things about those who are more worthy. Mark says that Jesus called the twelve to him and sent them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits. This practice of serving the word by twos, according to God’s will, seems to be ancient, going back to Moses and Aaron when the people came out of Egypt. For God brought Israel out by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were likewise of one mind, and together they quieted the people who had been stirred up by the ten. Eldad and Medad also prophesied in the camp, and they were likewise of one mind. Later still, God sent out Paul and Barnabas to the nations, and such men were an example of “two on earth agreeing.” The saying “A brother helped by a brother is like a fortified city” also fits them, and so does “Two are better than one.” Matthew shows in his list that the twelve were arranged in pairs, for he sets them in couples. Just as a farmer works the land with a yoked pair of oxen, so the Lord yoked the apostles two by two and sent them out, working the land of those who hear in truth and believe, together with them.

LUKE 10

¹⁰ Verse 10. “Into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say:” ¹¹ Verse 11. “Even the dust that clung to us from your city we wipe off against you.” For the dust, from your sins, would justly come back upon you. In a simpler sense, he meant “shake off the dust” either to show that they had taken nothing from them, or to serve as a witness against them of the long journey the apostles had made for their sake. Notice that

the cities that do not welcome the apostles and sound teaching have broad streets. Corresponding to the broad street are the gate and the roomy road that lead to destruction, and many are those who travel by it. ³⁸ Verse 38. While they were traveling, he entered a certain village. A woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ Verse 39. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the feet of Jesus and listened to his word.

⁴⁰ Verse 40. But Martha was distracted with much serving. She came up and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her, then, to help me." ⁴¹ Verse 41. Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed." ⁴² Verse 42. "Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." For "One thing is needed," the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" is useful. For "Many things are needed," you may set beside it "You shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness," and whatever else is said in the same way. You may take Martha as standing for action and Mary for contemplation. Or the one as standing for Judea and the other for the church from the nations. Or Martha as standing for those from the circumcision who believed and keep the things of the law in a Jewish way, and Mary for those who are freed from these things and sit only at the feet of Jesus. For if you look at it from different angles, you will find Martha more bodily and caught up in many things, and Mary devoted to contemplation alone and to spiritual things.

LUKE 11

² Verse 2. "Our Father in heaven, may your name be made holy; may your kingdom come." I think that no one can say "Father" to God unless he is filled with the Spirit of adoption. A Son who gives glory to the Father would say "Father." But he must also keep the commandment that says, "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father who is in heaven." "May your kingdom come": that every rule and authority and power may be brought to nothing, and also every kingdom of the world, and the sin that reigns in our mortal bodies. And God will reign over all of these. ³ Verse 3. "Give us our daily bread." The words "each day" are added of necessity. For our true life is, as it were, a provision for us, so that the inner man may live according to God.

⁵ Verses 5 and 7. "Which of you" is said to the disciples. "Will have a friend" is said to show that God is a friend to the saints, as he was to Moses

and to Abraham. Perhaps this “midnight,” this narrowed [or: shut-in] time, is a time of life, when the destroyer enters every house in the Egypt of this world where the doorpost has not been marked with the blood of Christ. The disciple asks the friend for three loaves. He wants to feed the one who has come to him from the road with the teaching about the Trinity, as it is said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” But how does the friend answer from inside? He says, “Do not cause me trouble.” Ask whether those who labor and are burdened pass their own troubles on to the Savior. For this reason he “bears our weaknesses and is pained for us.” Or, just as God is said to be angry at another who sins, so also he is said to be troubled by the one who brings him trouble. [The clause “just as God does not sleep for this one” is uncertain in the Greek.] Consider this too: bread is the soul’s necessary food in knowledge, without which no one can be saved. An example is the exact account of how one must live. Fish, like a relish with the bread, is the love of learning. An example is knowing how the world is put together, how the elements work, the beginning, the end and the middle of the ages, and whatever else wisdom goes on to list. So God does not give a stone in place of bread, which the devil wanted Jesus to eat. Nor does he give a serpent in place of fish, which the Ethiopians eat, who are unworthy to eat fish. For there, says the [Psalmist], “you crushed the head of the dragon on the water, you gave him as food to the Ethiopian peoples.” Nor, in plain terms, does he give what is inedible and harmful in place of what is nourishing and helpful.

³⁴ Verse 34. The lamp of the body is the eye. So when your eye is single, your whole body is also full of light. But when it is evil, your body also is dark. ³⁵ Verse 35. Take care, then, that the light in you is not darkness.

³⁶ Verse 36. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it dark, it will be wholly full of light, as when the lamp lights you with its flash. I think the meaning of the passage that follows is this. Suppose your body has become full of light, because the body has been lit by the lamp. Suppose no part in you is still dark, because you no longer sin at all. Then the whole body will be so full of light that its rays are compared to a lamp in a lightning flash, which gives light and breaks up the darkness by its brightness. For the illumination that comes from the mind is like the most brilliant lightning. The light in the body, which is by nature darkness, is like the lamp in the lightning, and it is led wherever the mind wishes.

⁵¹ Verse 51. “From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias.” So the executioners, having failed to find Elisabeth and the child, vent their anger on Zacharias; so the account goes. For this very reason, indeed, they did the same also because of the virgin Mary, after she gave birth to our Savior. She had come to worship and stood in the place of the virgins. Those who knew she had given birth tried to stop her. But Zacharias said to those who were stopping her that she was worthy of the place of the virgins, since she was still a virgin. So they killed him as a plain lawbreaker, between the temple and the altar, while he was serving and sacrificing to God, and they mingled his blood with the blood [of the others].

LUKE 12

⁶ Verse 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria, and not one of them is forgotten before God? ⁷ Verse 7. “But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.” Notice that he did not say “the fall of a sparrow to the earth,” as Matthew does. Here the five sparrows are a hint about the five senses of the righteous person. These senses perceive things on high, things beyond the human: they see divine things, hear the voice of God, taste the living bread, smell the fragrance of Christ’s perfumes and the oil of gladness, and touch the living Word. Though they are despised by those who judge the things of the Spirit to be foolishness and [folly], they are not forgotten before God. Compare the apparent sense of the saying, that not even the smallest sparrow is forgotten before God, with the passages which plainly show that God forgets some people because of their sin. In the plain sense, then, these words show the fine detail of Providence and a knowledge that reaches down to the smallest things. In the spiritual sense, however, the sensible part falls to the earth, like sparrows. When [you are carried] upward, it seeks the things below, for those caught in the evils of the flesh. Such a person has been handed over to a passion of dishonor and has lost freedom along with honor. Such is the one who has been lifted up by the Word and yet sets his mind on earthly things. Again, according to the plain sense, the words “it will not fall to the earth without your Father” show not his will but his foreknowledge. Of the things that happen, some happen by his will, some by his good pleasure, and some by his permission.

LUKE 13

²⁰ Verse 20. So again he said: "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?" ^{21a} Verse 21. "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened." One can take this in different ways: the woman as the Church, and the leaven as the Holy Spirit. The three measures are body, spirit and soul. These are made holy by the leaven of the Holy Spirit, so that together with the Holy Spirit they become one lump of dough. Again, the Savior calls the Holy Spirit "leaven," meaning the power brought to completion from the sowing, and he hints at it in this way. The word of the heavenly kingdom, after the first sowing among people, grows and bears full fruit. It then supplies the provision of the Holy Spirit to those who have been helped through the first stages, like leaven leavening a lump of dough. The woman, the wisdom of God, hides this leaven in three measures of flour. For to those who have gained, through great care and the labor of the sowing, three measures of flour (that is, teachings, the divine knowledge concerning the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), the wisdom of God supplies the Holy Spirit. The same wisdom, in another sense, hides the leaven (the benefit that comes from her) in the three measures of flour, understood as the whole person who is from God, made up of body, soul and spirit, through the supply of divine inspiration, until the whole is leavened.

^{21b} So this person, shaped and leavened by sharing in the heavenly leaven, will be called a heavenly and spiritual person, and a new lump of dough, since the three flours that were given have become one mixture, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in them. And so, becoming a new and spiritual bread, in keeping with the Apostle who says, "We who are many are one bread and one body," we shall take on the image and likeness of the life-giving bread of all things, who came down from heaven and made us like himself. He does well to compare the wisdom of God to a woman in these matters. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, in keeping with the example of the leaven. In the parable of the sowing he introduced the figure of a farmer and sower, and a woman would not reasonably have been mentioned there. Nor here, where leaven is put into three measures of flour, does the parable fit by likening the sower named from that earlier parable to a woman making bread.

^{29a} Verse 29. "And they will come from east and west and north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God." In Matthew a par-

able is also woven in. In it, different workers of different ages are called to the commandments as if into a vineyard: early in the morning, and around the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours. Perhaps the whole life of man is the “day” of the parable. Those called from childhood and earliest youth are the ones the master hired at daybreak. Those called after boyhood are the ones from the third hour. Those who are brought to godliness after the heat and burden of youth, the older men, are around the ninth hour. Those who are already old and right at the point of departure are shown by the eleventh. What is examined is the choice, not the time, that is, what a person has done in faith. So those who have done what fell to them from the moment they were called are given the same wage of salvation. That wage is the denarius, the coin of the divine and most royal image, which at the beginning was seized by the evil one through deceit, in the transgression of the commandment, and [choked out]. By this, it seems to me, the parable hints at the mark of the kingdom itself, because the engraving on the denarius signifies the image of a king stamped upon it. All who have come into the vineyard and into the commonwealth of godliness, and have taken up one and the same work, ought justly to share in the same kingdom. For this reason the denarius, the token of the kingdom, is fittingly given to all. Of these, some were called in youth, some around the age of young manhood, some around the middle of a man’s life, and some when they had already reached full manhood and gone beyond it.

^{29b} Others were called as old men, already aged and near the sunset of life. Someone might also give another explanation and apply what the parable shows to those who were counted worthy of the divine call from the very first, from the beginning of life until the end of the age. On this reading, “early in the morning” refers to those who were saved first, at the beginning of life, and were called to the work of godliness. The second group are those around Enoch and Noah. The third hour refers to those around Abraham. The sixth refers to those in the times of the prophets. The eleventh refers to those after the saving appearance of God. All of these will be counted worthy of one and the same reward, which is signified by the denarius, as it is referred to the kingdom of God. All these intervals are equal in number to the senses. The first call is [touch]. That is why it was said about the plant, “You shall not touch it.” Smell belongs to the second, which is why, at Noah, “the Lord smelled a fragrant aroma.” Taste belongs to Abraham, which is why he

set before the angels loaves baked in the ashes and a calf. Hearing belongs to Moses, when the voice of God was heard from heaven. Sight, more honored than all the senses, belongs to the coming of Christ, when people saw Christ with blessed eyes. Evening is the end of the age, when the last workers receive their wage first. For those who were earlier given testimony through faith did not receive the promise. We who are Christ's disciples expect to receive the wage first.

LUKE 14

¹² Verse 12. He also said to the one who had invited him: "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not call your friends, or your brothers, or your relatives, or rich neighbors. Otherwise they may invite you back in return, and you will have been repaid." ¹³ Verse 13. "But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." ¹⁴ Verse 14. "And you will be blessed, when they have nothing to repay you. For it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous." [So] according to the letter, we are commanded not to invite friends and neighbors, but the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. Mystically, though, friends may be those who rejoice with us in the teachings of the truth. Brothers are those who hold kindred teachings. Relatives are those who want to draw near to us in these things. Neighbors are those who have not pitched their tents altogether far from our teachings. The word "rich" must be taken as applying to all of these. Those who advertise lectures invite the rich and the poor. But the one who serves the word for true glory is free of vainglory. He invites the poor, that is, those without experience of words, to make them rich. He invites the maimed, that is, those whose understanding is damaged, to heal them. He invites the lame, those who limp in the word, so that they may make straight paths. He invites the blind, those who lack the power of contemplation, so that they may see the true light. The words "they have nothing to repay you" mean the same as: they do not know how to give an argument, in the manner of dialectic, in answer to a question or a reply.

¹⁶ Verse 18. "And they all began, as if from one mind, to make excuses." That is, as though they had agreed on it beforehand. The first said to him, "I have bought a field, and I have to go out and see it. I ask you, have me excused." ¹⁹ Verse 19. "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out. I ask you, have me excused.'" ^{20a} Verse 20. "And another said, 'I have married a wife, and for this reason I cannot come.'" In

general, people fall away from the calling in three ways: by the appearance of better teachings, by the pursuit of things perceived by the senses, and by love of pleasure. Those who bought a field and so decline the banquet are those who have taken up other teachings about the divine nature, teachings with great persuasiveness and a variety of argument. They also despise the [field] that holds within itself [field] and powers. So the man who has not seen or tested the teaching he acquired, because he was already taken up with it, leaves the banquet by necessity and not willingly. He leaves the one who invited him, and perhaps even himself. He says "I ask you" as one who shows respect to the one who invited him in word only. The man who bought five yoke of oxen is the one who despises the intelligible nature and is fond of perceptible things. He too did not test from the beginning what had been bought. If the number two is assigned to matter, this man honored material things. For this reason he too declined the intelligible banquet. The other is the one who said, "I have married a wife." He is the one who thinks he has found wisdom, and by sharing in it he turns down the true wisdom. Or he is the one who is united to [a girl], a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God. That, then, is the general sense of the parable. But take the passage in another way as well: so far as we are human, it is not good for us to know the riches of God's kindness.

20b Of necessity God is made like a human being, so that he may speak to people as people, since they cannot have everything arranged for them by God while God remains as he is. And he will stop being likened to a human being when we have ceased from strife, jealousy and the other evils, and from walking according to man, and are counted worthy to hear from God: "I said, You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High." He has also ceased to be called many other things which sinful man needs: panther, lion and bear, as it is written in the prophets. In the same way I understand the words, "Our God is a consuming fire." For to the one who is not worthy to be consumed, he is light, according to John, who says, "God is light." And again he says, "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that if it is revealed, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." For even if we are now counted worthy to see God with the mind and the heart, we do not see him as he is, but as he becomes for the sake of our dispensation. But in the restoration of all things, of which he spoke through the mouth of his holy ones, we shall not see, as now, what he is not, but, as

will be fitting then, what he is. So, among us human beings he was made like a human being. But among those who have made themselves gods, he is like God. For he says, "God is in the assembly of gods."

LUKE 15

Verse 23. "And bring the fattened calf, and let us eat and be merry." If the passage must be looked at on a higher level, it begins with words that are moral, like food, in the phrase "let us eat." Then it moves to words of the higher vision, like drink, in the phrase "let us be merry." For wine is the beginning of merriment, as it is written.

LUKE 16

Verse 17. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fall." A single stroke is not only the iota among the Greeks; among the Hebrews too there is the letter they call "iod." Iota can also be taken symbolically as Jesus, since the beginning of his name is written with iota (iod) among both Greeks and Hebrews. So the Word of God is in the law. He does not pass it by, and he does not fall before everything has come to pass. Then he does fall, so that he may bear more fruit. He is not defeated; he humbles himself and becomes obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

LUKE 17

¹² Verse 12. And as he was entering a certain village, ten leprous men met him, and they stood at a distance. ¹³ Verse 13. And they lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." You may well suppose that the laws about leprosy are a kind of varied portrait of the soul. Who would not be puzzled to see that in one case leprosy makes a person unclean when it appears on living skin, while in another case it frees a person from all uncleanness once he has become leprous all over? For a person is counted unclean when living skin is defiled, after he has become wholly leprous, by what is called leprosy covering the living skin entirely. [This sentence is hard to follow in the Greek and the text may be corrupt.] I take leprosy to stand for the irrational passions of the soul, and living skin to stand for the rational condition. So the passage seems to me to offer a mystery. In the age of infants the soul is blameless, since its lack of reason frees it from every reproach. But if living skin appears in it, that is, if the beginning of reason starts to sprout, then the beginning of sin comes into being. This continues until the living

skin gains the upper hand, that is, until reason grows and is made perfect, all the skin becomes living, and the leprosy completely disappears.

LUKE 18

Verse 20. "You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother." The passage refutes the madness of the Marcionites and the Manichaeans, who say that the law is foreign to Christ. For Mark says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. He would not have loved, over the fulfilling of something foreign to him, the man who spoke so boldly about these commandments. But a question arises: how was he loved, when he was not going to follow Jesus to life? The one who kept the things of the law is worthy of love for his earlier conduct. But his neglect of the perfect meant that the love given for what came before could not become complete.

LUKE 19

²⁹ Verse 29. And it happened that as he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mountain called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,
³⁰ Verse 30. saying, "Go into the village opposite. As you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no human being has ever sat. Untie it and bring it."
³¹ Verse 31. "And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this to him: 'Its Lord has need of it.'" ³² Verse 32. And those who were sent went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ Verse 33. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"
³⁴ Verse 34. And they said, "Its Lord has need of it." ³⁵ Verse 35. And they led it to Jesus. For where there is obedience and a holy place, there the Lord [sends] the apostles to untie a tied colt, on which no word of Moses or Isaiah or any other of the prophets ever sat. But when Christ came, who is Lord by nature and alone, the many fall silent, those who were lords before the Savior became Lord over them. For when someone is a slave to wickedness, he is a slave to many passions. But once the Lord has come to be his Lord, he cannot have many lords. Verse 35 continues: And some of them threw their garments on the colt and set Jesus on it.

³⁶ Verse 36. And as he went, they spread their garments on the road. The disciples take the word and set it upon the souls of those who hear. The good deeds of the apostles, laid upon us, also adorn us. For they want us even to tread on their garments, as we examine the apostolic words.

LUKE 20

¹⁹ Verse 19. And the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, and they were afraid, for they knew that he had told this parable against them. ²⁰ Verse 20. They watched him closely and sent spies, who pretended to be righteous men, so that they might catch him in something he said and hand him over to the rule and authority of the governor. ²¹ Verse 21. They questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and that you show no partiality, but teach the way of God in truth. ²² Verse 22. Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?" ²³ Verse 23. But he saw through their craftiness and said to them, "Why are you testing me? ²⁴ Verse 24. Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it bear?" They answered, "Caesar's." ²⁵ Verse 25. He replied to them, "Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

²⁶ Verse 26. They could not catch him in anything he said before the people, and they were amazed at his answer and fell silent. A loftier interpretation: as it is written in Genesis, man was made in the image of God. Later, because of his disobedience, he also took on an earthly image. Just as a coin bears the image of the ruler of the nations, so the one who does the works of the Almighty bears his image. The Savior urges us to give back and put away the earthly image, and to bear the image that was ours from the beginning. In keeping with this Paul says, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly." This, then, is what is shown by the words, "Give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Scholia on the Song of Songs

ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

c. AD 240–250

Greek comments on the Song of Songs attributed to Origen, collected from manuscripts of the catena tradition. Origen's large commentary and homilies on the Song survive in Latin (in Rufinus's and Jerome's translations); these scholia are the Greek remains and are mostly short.

PREFACE

(From the Vatican Catena, titled: "Epitome of selected expositions on the Song of Songs, by Procopius, Christian sophist, from the voice of Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria, Origen and Philo of Carpasia, Apollinarius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and various others, namely Didymus, holy Isidore, Theodoret and Theophilus." — Mai, *Class. Auct.*, vol. IX.)

SECTION 1

¹ "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." She says: let him not betroth me through the prophets, but let him speak with me himself, by spiritual perception. John speaks of this perception when he says, "and our hands handled concerning the Word of life." She says this as one who has heard what the prophets said: "The king desired your beauty"; and elsewhere: "As a bridegroom rejoices over a bride, so the Lord will rejoice over you." So whenever we search into some divine teaching and grasp it, let us think of ourselves as kissed by the mouth of the bridegroom. And as long as we are at a loss, let us suppose that we are clinging to him and saying, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." ² "For your breasts are better than wine, and the fragrance of your ointments is above all spices."

³ That is, your virtues surpass the virtues we have, as in the words, "His virtue covered the heavens." For he is wisdom itself and righteousness itself, but we are wise and righteous only by sharing in them, according to our choice and ability, as we come to live in the sweet fragrance of these. "Your

name is ointment poured out. Therefore the young women have loved you.”

⁴ Perhaps she is prophesying about the name of Christ, the power that filled the world at his coming. So that, as Paul says, to some it became “a fragrance from death to death,” and to others “from life to life,” the bride would say: “Therefore all have loved you.” But it is not only the young women, who are renewed day by day and have no wrinkle or spot. The ointment was poured out so that it would no longer be kept silent, shut up in unspeakable secrets.

⁵ “The king has brought me into his chamber.” That is, she means that it is impossible [for any but] the soul worthy of love, or the Church, or the governing part of Christ [to enter]. Paul, having entered it, said: “But we have the mind of Christ, that we may know the things freely given to us by God.” And what are these? “What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man; these things God has prepared for those who love him.” For in the bridegroom’s chamber all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. She, going ahead of the young women, was brought in, and stood as queen at the right hand of the king, in a garment woven with gold, as David says. But concerning the young women: “Virgins shall be brought to the king after her,” and what follows.

⁶ “We will love your breasts more than wine; uprightness has loved you.”
⁷ That is, even if now, because of our weakness, we love the wine more than your breasts, bridegroom, when we have improved we will love the breasts more than it. Wine, which gladdens the young women, stands for the things of the law; but perfection is the bridegroom’s breasts. Then, as a defense for not yet loving the better things, she says, “Uprightness has loved you”; but we have not yet made our own paths straight. ⁸ “I am black and beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.” ⁹ The Church from the nations says this to the souls from Jerusalem, or to Jerusalem itself. She confesses her blackness, because she does not come from bright and enlightened fathers; for this reason she is compared to darkness. But she is beautiful because of the word she has received; and she is like the curtains of Solomon which she had, along with the other things he possessed in his glory.

¹⁰ “Do not look at me because I am blackened, because the sun has looked askance at me.” ¹¹ Or: because I was darkened by sin, Christ overlooked me on account of my unbelief; the Scriptures proclaim him the sun of righteousness. ¹² “My mother’s sons fought against me; they made me a

keeper in the vineyards; my own vineyard I did not keep.”¹³ That is, the disciples of Christ who teach. They wanted to cleanse me from the evil thoughts [that come from him], and from the demons who work together with those thoughts. So they fought against them in me, since they are sons of the same mother as I am. I mean the mother of freedom. They were taken up into the remnant chosen by grace. I received the covenant that belongs to the Jerusalem above, and I am born again by promise. They did not first set her as a guard and then fight. Rather, by fighting first they made her fit to be placed in the vineyards as a guard... This is Moses and the prophets. Each of them was a full field, which the Lord blessed... And a vineyard: someone who has come to be among these, and does not keep his former condition, as a vineyard from Sodom, makes use of the present word. [The end of this sentence is uncertain.]

¹⁴ If you do not know yourself, O fair one among women, go out in the tracks of your flocks, and pasture your kids by the tents of the shepherds.
¹⁵ The saying much repeated among the Greeks, “Know yourself,” which was handed down to the wise Solomon, has been taken up here in advance. By this saying the soul is now threatened by her lover and bridegroom. If she does not keep the beauty given to her in the image of God, she faces expulsion from within, and being placed among the last, pasturing the perverse kids. “You will pasture them at the tents of the shepherds,” at one time this man’s, at another that man’s, like some vagrant woman, until you are taught by experience and turn back to the knowledge of yourself. The word also fits the Church. A person knows himself when he knows whether his disposition is good or bad. He may be far short of the road to virtue. Or he may be stretching forward to what lies ahead, forgetting what is behind. And if he has not yet received it or been made perfect, he may be drawing near to the borders of beauty. It is also a task to hold back from each action [and examine] how it came about, in every thought and word. By “women” he means souls that are not pure and not undistinguished. A soul that neglects her own knowledge could be tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching, in the dice-play of men. Everywhere she would pasture her own perverse kids rather than pasture by the good word. This word is gentle, even if [it is never smooth?]. From now on she is already fair among women, counted together with the Church of God and more beautiful than the little ones in it. For the so-called women of the Church are incomparably better

than the souls of the nations, which go after lovers, the opposing powers, and are called women but not virgins. How is she not better, who has looked up to her own Creator? “Go out” is like being handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, when someone is cut off from the Church. This comes after she was, as he said to the young women, brought in by the king into his chamber.

¹⁶ How have your cheeks been made beautiful like a turtledove’s? Paul also says that the Church, the bride, is members of Christ. Her face, so to speak, is those who surpass the rest in beauty and think nothing shameful. They bear in her the fruit of the modesty that belongs to self-control. Perhaps they were not beautiful before, but they changed so much that it is said to the bride, “How have your cheeks been made beautiful?”, since they have no spot or wrinkle. Perhaps it is also because she knows only the one God, for the turtledove too pairs with only one mate. ¹⁷ We will make you likenesses of gold with spangles of silver. ¹⁸ This means: “The silver was not plentiful, nor poured out.” Few things were spoken in secret by the prophets and the wise men of old. But when he came to stay, the true veil was seen by the one who sees. It was torn from top to bottom, so that the things inside the temple’s inaccessible places could be seen, when the one who lay down and slept like a lion and like a lion’s cub was raised. And after these things:

¹⁹ For then those who have been conformed to his resurrection will themselves receive gold in place of the likenesses. For they will be multiplied with silver and gold. ²⁰ While the king is on his couch, my nard gave its fragrance. ²¹ She says: my nard, with which I anointed him, has given the fragrance of the bridegroom. She anointed the feet of Jesus with her own nard and wiped them with her hair. Then she received it back, changed by the fragrance of the bridegroom. When it reached her head and she perceived it, she says, “My nard gave me the fragrance of the bridegroom.” Therefore the woman disciple’s perfume filled the whole house, as if it came from the very skin of Jesus. ²² My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh-oil; he will lodge between my breasts. ²³ I have said that the bride’s nard gave me the fragrance of the bridegroom. Now I say that my beloved breathes the scent of myrrh that is not poured out and does not give off its scent outside. It is bound up, and so it gives its sweetness more intensely. The Church from the nations first had a brother in the earlier people, since Christ, as far as the flesh goes, came from them. So she calls him the son of a brother, and of a bridegroom.

Aquila, however, has rendered it “father’s brother,” so we must say that the people of old are the father of the Church from the nations. For the birth in God came from the law and the prophets that were among them, and from them our advance toward godliness began. With the bride’s father given this meaning, the Savior is a brother, since like them he was born under the law.

²⁴ “Behold, you are beautiful, my neighbor; behold, you are evil; your eyes are doves.” ²⁵ It seems that the bride has now seen the beauty of the bridegroom more clearly than before. Through her dove-like eyes she perceives the excellence of the Word and the surpassing quality of his beauty. Perhaps she also hints that the body is a bed shared by herself and the bridegroom, in which the soul, while still in it, is counted worthy of fellowship with the Word. So Paul says, “Our bodies are members of Christ.” By saying “our” he means that the body belongs to the bride, and by saying “members of Christ” he means it belongs to the bridegroom. She calls the bridegroom “shady” because of the density of the insights found in the Word and in wisdom. And if the bed shared by both is flourishing, it is no wonder that it shows every good action done through the body as well.

SECTION 2

¹ “I am the flower of the plain, the lily of the valleys.” ² By “flower” he means what is on the way to becoming fruit. In the earthly place, called the plain, the bridegroom, the Word, is a flower with regard to what is still to come. For when the perfect comes, the flower will change into fruit. And since people cannot yet take in more than the flower, he says “on earth.” For this reason the bridegroom has become like a flower of the plain. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, so that afterward we might be able to look upon his glory. Perhaps for the nobler and level places, called plains, he is a flower, and for those lower and more hollow he is a lily. Having said this, the bridegroom compares the one who is near him with other daughters, the remaining souls, who are thorns by comparison with her. Such are the souls that are not near the bridegroom. But the one who is near is a lily shining out in the midst of them.

³ “As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the sons. I desired his shadow and sat down, and his fruit was in my throat.”

⁴ It was fitting for the bride, now wholly formed by the bridegroom’s beauty, to say nothing about herself. Instead, in addition to what the bridegroom said about himself, she compares him to an apple tree, and their sons

to trees of the forest. Out of the excess of her longing she even desires his shadow, and passes over the quality of its depth. She seems to say this to the young women, just as the bridegroom spoke earlier to his companions. By “sons” she means either the companions, whom she has compared to the bridegroom’s unfruitful trees, or those who are strangers to him. “In his shadow she desired and sat down.” Jeremiah too says in Lamentations: “The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord, was caught in our corruptions, of whom we said, ‘In his shadow we shall live among the nations.’” How could his shadow not become the cause of life for us, who have been set free from the shadow of the law? For the law had a shadow of the good things to come. We are no longer under law but under grace, even if we are still under a shadow, though one very different. For after the present life we shall no longer see through a mirror and in a riddle, but shall behold the truth face to face. The bride will also say, “Until the day breaks and the shadows flee.” For our life is like a shadow, and the one from the nations sat in the shadow of death, and those who do not believe are sitting there still.

5 “Bring me into the house of wine.” 6 She says this to the bridegroom’s friends, the holy angels, or the apostles and prophets. It is almost as if she were saying, “Mix me together with the body of Christ.” 7 “Support me with myrrh, surround me with apples, for I am wounded with love.” 8 Symmachus published it this way: “Lay me down among vine-blossoms.” That means among fragrant trees that bear good fruit and are in bloom, as opposed to the so-called worthless trees, which are fruitless or bear bad fruit. Some copies have: “Support me among unperfumed things.” This must be understood either of believers who are not yet fit to be called members of her who has no spot or wrinkle, or of people outside the faith who are nonetheless decent. As for “pile me up with apples,” Symmachus makes it clearer and says, “roll apples around me.” The bride wants to rest with many apples rolled around her [or: him]. I think these apples are the fruit of the apple tree among the trees of the bridegroom’s forest, so that she may share in their quality. “For I am wounded,” she says, “by a love-charm,” according to Symmachus, and “by the chosen arrow,” according to Isaiah.

9 The voice of my beloved! Look, he is coming, leaping on the mountains, bounding over the hills. 10 Some have assigned this to what comes before, but the Hebrew sets it as a separate section. It is clear that the bride is talking with the daughters of Jerusalem when she suddenly hears the bride-

groom's voice. He is presumably speaking to some people. She perceives him on the mountains and hills near her place, and nothing about him is out of keeping with a young deer. Then, in his eagerness for the bride, he came near the house and appeared behind it. Next he leapt and reached the windows of the house, as though lovingly wanting to look in at her. Near the house where the bride is, many nets have been spread out, lying in ambush for the bride and those around her. The bridegroom, being stronger, tore through them and looked in through them. He calls the bride to come near. By what he has done to the nets he encourages her to despise them, since they are already torn. He also encourages her because the hard season has passed through them. He calls it winter, and it brought useless and violent rain. He urges her on, too, with the good things of the present season. He speaks of flowers, as in spring, and of the tending of vines. He describes the voice of the turtledove, the young figs on the fig tree, and the vines in blossom. He also describes the place where she will rest with him. He wanted her, once there, to appear to the bridegroom with her whole face, and to let him hear her sweet voice.

¹¹ “My beloved answers and says to me: Arise, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove. For look, the winter has passed, the rain has gone and has departed on its own. The flowers have appeared on the earth. The time of pruning has arrived. The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. The fig tree has put out its young figs. The vines are in blossom, they have given off their fragrance,” and so on. ¹² “Arise,” he says, “from perceptible things to intelligible things, so that we may be together.” “The rain has gone”: we would say the rain was the time before the Coming, when God commanded the clouds to rain the word of the law and the prophets. This has ceased, since “the law and the prophets were until John.” Spring and summer come after the Coming. There is no longer any need of rains, since the flowers that come through Christ have appeared on the earth. And since his Coming, the fig tree is not cut down as fruitless, as it was in the former time. For now it has put out young figs, and the vines are in blossom. That is why he says, “[as] branches of Christ we are a fragrance to God.” “Arise, come, my neighbor, my beautiful one, my dove. And come, my dove, into the shelter of the rock, next to the outer wall. Show me your face, and let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.”

¹³ He wants the soul to rise above perceptible things. He calls the perceptible world the wall and outer wall, as of a city. So the soul that shares in the Word must be in the shelter of the rock, outside not only the city's wall but also the outer wall. Having come near in this way, she can behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, with unveiled face, obeying the one who says, "Show me your face." He also longs to hear her speaking, and admires her voice as sweet. The outer wall (*proteichisma*) is what Isaiah calls the "*perideichon*," saying, "he will set a wall, or an outer wall." So he wants her to go out from bodily things and to be not only at the wall, which I take to be the account of the world, but also next to the outer wall. This is the last principle of bodily things and the beginning of the incorporeal.

¹⁴ Catch for us the little foxes that ruin vineyards, for our vines are in blossom. ¹⁵ The bridegroom says these things to his friends. These are either angels or holy men, all who are teachers of the Church. The exhortation is given for the salvation of the vineyards. The crafty powers are to be caught, because they destroy the very beginning of the fruit's growth. Then the vines, tended by God, will be able to advance from first blossoming to the full ripening of the fruit. Because of free will, however, they are able either to bear fruit or not. Or perhaps the foxes are also people, who by the sharpness of a different teaching hinder those who have begun to run well. He wants these caught while they are still small, before they advance further in ungodliness. Once one has become a large fox, the friends cannot catch him, and only the bridegroom can hunt him down. But while they are just beginning to practice worse things, they are easily caught even by the friends. He may also be calling the vineyards "small", for a fox has no power against large ones.

¹⁶ My beloved is mine, and I am his. He pastures his flock among the lilies, until the day breathes and the shadows move. ¹⁷ Either the bride speaks to the companions of the bridegroom, as one who has no share with the foxes. "For they shared with us," she says, "blood and flesh, and we shared in-corruption with him." Or she speaks this way because God comes to be in the soul, and the soul moves its dwelling into God. Paul speaks in the same way: the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. For the bride, the Church, is the body of Christ, which is in no way for fornication but always for the Lord. The Savior himself says, "Remain in me, and I in you." In the verses that follow, however, it is written the other way

around: "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Or perhaps this is because the beginning of the kindness came from the bridegroom. If he had not shown himself to her, she would not have been devoted to the bridegroom. When she beheld his divine beauty, she was brought to a saving love, and after that, devoted to his beauty, she says, "and I am his." Then she took up the order the other way round. Before the perfect came, she said, "I am my beloved's." But when he is completely revealed and leaves nothing hidden, she perceives this and says, "and my beloved is mine." It is said somewhere in the prophecies, "The Lord himself will shepherd us forever," but not as he shepherds us now, among lilies in the midst of thorns. So after saying, "I am the flower of the field, the lily of the valleys," he adds, "As a lily among thorns, so is my neighbor among the daughters." And [note that he did not say this as if of the bride (?)]. For this reason he has also come: so that the flock being shepherded would not be caught on the thorns.

¹⁸Until the day breathes and the shadows pass away. ¹⁹For this reason he also dares to say mystically in Jacob, "By day I was being burned up by the heat." For in the heat of the present life we need the one who shepherds us, because of the noonday demons. For he says to the obedient person, "He will not be afraid of the noonday demon," and likewise, "The sun will not burn you." The one who bears our weaknesses and suffered pain on our behalf was himself burned by the heat for us, to buy us out from these things. In the same way he bought us out from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us. He also shepherds among lilies, and he does so until the shadows of life pass away, as in the words, "Our days pass by like shadows." Perhaps also, before his coming, through the law and the prophets, he shepherded among lilies while the scorching heat still lasted. After his coming he still shepherds, but not among lilies. For as if the day had already breathed out, it is said, "Beloved, you know that it is the last hour."

²⁰Turn back, be like, my beloved, a gazelle or a young deer of the stags, upon the mountains of the hollows. ²¹Earlier the bride spoke to the young women; now she speaks to the bridegroom. So she takes up a likeness that suits the present moment: to the gazelle, because of its keen sight, and to the fawn of the deer, because it destroys the race of serpents. She asks him to do these things on the mountains of the hollows. When she says "Turn back," she means: turn back from existing in the form of God, and take up these things, coming among human beings out of love for me. Most of them, be-

cause of their wickedness, spend their lives in hollows. The “mountains of the hollows” are the righteous, who rise above evils. When the Word has turned back, he is likened to a gazelle among those who devote themselves to contemplation, and to a fawn of the deer among those who are more practical and who tear down the opposing powers. The word “or” in “or a fawn” is a disjunctive particle. Theodotion said, “on the mountains of incense,” which still points to the saints.

SECTION 3

1 On my bed at night I sought the one whom my soul loved. I sought him and did not find him. I called him and he did not answer me. “I will get up now and go around in the city, in the markets and in the streets, and I will seek the one whom my soul loved.” I sought him and did not find him. I called him and he did not answer me. The watchmen who go around in the city found me. “Have you seen the one whom my soul loved?” It was only a little after I had passed from them that I found the one whom my soul loved. I took hold of him and did not let him go, until I brought him into my mother’s house and into the chamber of the one who conceived me. ^{2a} Having spoken of the mysteries that come before the marriage, she now calls him at night to her bed. She wants to share in deeper secrets and to take part in a more perfect rest, for that is what the bed means. “At night” means in a time of quiet, far from the sight of those who cannot behold such things. The soul of the one who seeks the deeper things of the divine Word on the bed must first be wounded with love. The beloved waits for the longing one to rise, so that, having intensified her desire, he may show himself at the right time to her who has labored much in seeking him. For after saying, “On my bed at night I sought the one whom my soul loved,” and, “I sought him and did not find him,” she adds, “I will get up now and go around.” Let us then put aside lying on our backs and drowsy closed eyes, and rise, obeying the one who says, “Awake now, you who sleep.” The whole world is the city that she must go all around, coming to know it through contemplation, in the teachings of wisdom. For these are the markets, from which something useful may be taken. But she also goes into the streets, for wisdom is praised in the ways out, and in the broad streets she speaks with boldness. We too have been commanded to write on the breadth of our heart. Yet since she is seeking something greater than markets and streets can offer, she says she has not found him.

^{2b} Even so, she keeps on toward the finding, and is found by those who guard the city and go around it. These would be the ministering spirits. They are the ones whom the Lord sent out to go through the earth. She asks them about the one she longs for, but no answer from them is recorded. We are taught that if we are going to find the one we long for, we must pass beyond them a little and become better than such angels. Peter seems to speak of them in his Letter, teaching the surpassing excellence of what is laid up for the perfect: “things into which angels long to look.” It is enough to pass such beings by only a little, so that the one longed for may be found; and once found, may be held; and once held, may be understood. For holding him is of no benefit unless constant meditation keeps hold of what has been understood. That is why she says, “I did not let him go until I brought him into my mother’s house.” So after departure from here, she may enter with him into the house of the Jerusalem above. There she brings in the more ordinary insights of the Word, but the more secret ones into the chambers of her who conceived the bride. The same one is shown to be both mother and the one who conceived, because the beginning of a person’s formation lies in conception. She is called mother after the shaping, and after the completion of the one conceived.

³ Who is this who comes up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the perfumer? ⁴ The soul that ascends in life and in word is very beautiful. It has fled the sins common among the many, which are said to go up out of the desert. The saying that the righteous person is the fragrance of Christ in every place, to those who are being saved, is understood in the same way as being “perfumed with incense”. It is like stalks sending up sweet smoke, which delights the breathing of those who call them blessed.

SECTION 4

¹ “Your teeth are like flocks of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing. All of them bear twins, and none among them is childless.” They bear twins in another sense too, because of the twofold understanding, the [literal] and the spiritual. “Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your speech is lovely.” ² That is, let the preparation of the word be fiery, so that it can win the hearer. Or it points to the blood-filled and life-giving quality of the words that go out through the lips, as if they were dipped in the true drink of the blood of Christ. ³ “Your cheek is like a piece of pomegranate rind, apart

from your silence.” ⁴ To the praise of self-control he adds praise for silence. The bride knows the times for lovely speech and the times for praiseworthy silence. And since a faithful spirit hides matters, the bride also hides her insights in the depths. They are like the seeds of the pomegranate, each in its own rank, [embodied] in the ruling part of the soul. That is why he added, “apart from your silence”. He means that the doctrines kept silent are like pomegranate seeds under its rind.

⁵ “Your neck is like the tower of David, built with Thalpiot. A thousand shields hang upon it, all the missiles of the mighty.” ⁶ Aquila has rendered Thalpiot as “battlements”, and Symmachus as “heights”. It follows from this that the tower above the battlements is wisdom. From wisdom, likewise, hang the shields, which are the doctrines that have been believed, which the Apostle called, in the singular, “the shield of faith”. The “missiles of the mighty” are the arguments that powerfully overturn the persuasiveness of those who oppose the truth. Instead of “battlements”, the fifth edition has “commandments”, interpreting the sense rather than the word. For unless commandments have been laid down first, it is impossible for true knowledge to be built up. ⁷ “Your two breasts are like two twin fawns of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies, until the day breathes and the shadows are moved.” ⁸ The ruling part of the soul is meant, as the breasts are in the case of a bride. It is the most keen-sighted part. That is why he compared it to two fawns of a gazelle grazing in beautiful and fragrant places, signifying things understood by the mind and things perceived by the senses. He says fawns because now we know in part. But when the perfect comes, we put away childishness. That will be when the scorching heat of the present life ceases and a time of refreshment arrives, and the shadow is dissolved as well, for the present life is a shadow. For then we shall feed as full-grown people, no longer as fawns.

⁹ “You have captured our heart, my sister, my bride. You have captured our heart with one of your eyes, with one necklace of your neck.” ¹⁰ The “necklace” is so called from being put on and fastened around the bride’s neck. But if the bride’s breasts remained as two fawns of a gazelle, how [were they made more beautiful]? As I said, it would not have been spoken in wonder about the faculty of the mind alone. The doubling of the wonder also showed the growth of beauty, as in “you have captured our heart”, said a second time. The bride’s garments are those who have put on Christ Jesus: bowels of compassion, kindness and humility. The lips are the teachers, and

the honeycombs are good words. The prophets and apostles made the honeycomb and the honey. ¹¹ “A garden shut up, my sister, my bride. A garden shut up, a fountain sealed.”

¹² A second time “a garden shut up” is said. The first refers to one who is making progress, the second to the perfect one, when his ruling part, once it has been [seen through], is stamped with the seal of the knowledge of God. Or else, now the bride is only a garden shut up, but in the age to come, because of her perfection and steadiness, she is also a fountain sealed. “For to everyone who has, it will be given, and he will have abundance.” Now, then, Scripture [says] that she is simply a garden. Elsewhere, as if speaking of another, it adds also “a vegetable garden”. ¹³ “Rise up, North wind, and come, South wind. Blow through my garden, and let my spices flow.” ¹⁴ The bride seems to rebuke the North wind, having received authority from the bridegroom, who rebuked the wind. That is why it is said in the three evangelists that he rebuked the wind, and the winds simply obey him. So Christ takes up residence in souls, [driving out] the devil. About him it is said, “God will come from Thaman”, that is, from the south.

SECTION 5

¹ “Open to me, my sister, my neighbor, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” ² The words “to me” had to be added to “open,” because it is possible to open to opposing powers as well. He seems to speak of the dew as a nuisance, and likewise of the drops of the night, since he appears to be looking for rest from them. This fits what came before. After the resurrection he entered when the doors were shut. He calls Thomas, and through him every unbelieving soul, to open its own heart and take in the full assurance of the resurrection. He calls him “perfect” because he said, “My Lord and my God.” The dew points to the resurrection at dawn, when the dew comes down. ³ My beloved passed by; my soul went out at his word.

⁴ When the bride reached the bolt, ready to open her soul to the Word, he showed only his hand and some of his deeds and then passed by. The bride was not yet able to go on to see more. At the same time he is arranging to increase her love still further. The soul goes out and leaves its home in the body because of the Bridegroom, the Word, since it has its citizenship in heaven. ⁵ I sought him and did not find him; I called him and he did not answer me. ⁶ The soul keeps on seeking the Bridegroom, the Word. When it has found

him, it is puzzled about other matters and seeks again. When it has contemplated those, it longs for the revelation of still others. And when it has obtained these, it prays that the Bridegroom will visit it again for the sake of yet more.

⁷ My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out from ten thousands. ⁸ He is white because he is true God, and ruddy because of the incarnation. ⁹ His head is gold, pure gold; his locks are palm clusters, black as a raven. ¹⁰ The locks are compared to the clusters of the palm trees because of their thickness. They say these clusters take the place of seed for the female palms, so that the trees bear edible fruit. The locks are called black, and the word is meant as praise, because of the depth of the thoughts that grow, as it were, in place of hairs; they add to the Bridegroom's beauty. The words "like a raven" were not chosen, I think, simply for the color. The raven is a symbol of the very deep ones, those filled with dark water in the clouds of the air. Job spoke of them: "Who has prepared food for the raven? Its young ones cry out to the Lord." God has prepared much food for those whose minds are deeper. Their disciples are the young ones; they give themselves to prayers and cry out to the Lord. They wander about and search for the food that lies within the things they are puzzling over.

¹¹ His jaws are like bowls of spice, putting forth perfumes. ¹² By the jaws of Christ we should understand those who serve the word of God and spiritual food. Because of the fullness of fragrance in their good works and words, they are like bowls of spice. Because of the varied word rooted in them, drawn from every part of the composition of Scripture, they always bear fruit like a perfumer's blend. ¹³ His belly is an ivory box, set upon a sapphire stone. ¹⁴ The belly of the Word means those who can hold the mysteries, that is, those who are hollow for receiving them. The "box" means those who are fit for keeping them safe. It is said to be ivory for its brightness and clearness. Such a belly, the ivory box, has been laid upon a sapphire stone, who is Christ. So all who are the belly of the Word take the Lord into the womb out of fear, and give birth to the spirit of salvation. For this reason the belly of the sacrifice in Leviticus is washed, so that nothing filthy is left in it.

SECTION 6

¹ You are beautiful, you who are near me, like good pleasure, lovely as Jerusalem, a wonder like ranks drawn up in order. ² The nearer she comes to the Bridegroom, the better the things she is compared to. To "beautiful,"

“lovely” and “near” he added “like Jerusalem.” He also calls the perfected Church awe-inspiring. She is so in one way among the opposing powers, who cannot fix their gaze on the beauty of her face. In another way she is so among those lower than herself, who resemble the ordered arrangements in the universe. Symmachus reads not “ranks set in order” but “battle lines.” For they are a wonder, like a formation of armies that strikes terror into enemies. ³ Turn your eyes away from facing me, for they have given me wings. ⁴ The Church looks upon the loveliness and beauty of Christ. With greater progress she is able to perceive his divinity, in that all things came to be through him. He rejoices in the power of her eyes, whether she is the Church or the soul that is the bride of the Word. He commands her to turn, on rational wings, toward the heights, so that she may reach the summit of perfection. Then she may see him winged, no longer coming down with her for her sake, and she may be able to say, “Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, now we no longer know him.” So, he says, he has gone up together with your progress, since you have become able to look in, and no longer to seek anything further in the [incarnate] economy.

⁵ Your hair is like flocks of goats that came up from Gilead. Your teeth are like flocks of shorn sheep that came up from the washing. All of them bear twins, and there is none among them that is childless. ⁶ These things are said to the bride for the second time. The first time, I think, she appeared like this as far as was possible, while she was still in this present life. The second time is when she has come to perfection. For this reason he now only hints at it: “Your teeth are like flocks of shorn sheep.” According to Aquila and Symmachus it reads, “Your teeth are like flocks of sheep,” or “of ewe lambs.” It was also fitting for this to be said at the point of perfection, so that “from the washing” refers no longer to the first washing but to the second. “Bearing twins” perhaps means that they are fed by the contemplation of things understood by the mind and things perceived by the senses. It also means that none of them is barren of nourishment from the word, whatever its subject.

⁷ There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and young women without number. But my dove is one. ⁸ The young women have no number. This is not because they fall outside of counting, but because they are [worthy] to be numbered. Perhaps this is connected with the same thought: the difference here among the young women who share in Christ resembles

what the Apostle says about the resurrection of the dead, when he speaks of “orders.” For since death came through a man, through a man also came the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive, each in his own order. For each person’s life, word and disposition will cause him to be ranked ahead according to his worth. ⁹Do not be surprised if the bridegroom had a beautiful bride, and perhaps a second and a third and more. If you also understand his brides, you will not be afraid to say from the Song: “There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and young women without number. But my dove is one.” The bridegroom is the Word. The bride is a rational living being. [This is so] if a soul understands and the bridegroom takes the bride. But since this Word shares himself not with one soul but with many different ones, let him call the one who shares in a royal and conspicuous honor the perfect dove. To those who are royal but of lesser rank he gives the name queens, and this is why there are sixty queens. He also shares himself with other souls who are being trained by the fear of God. These are the concubines. There are still other souls of lower rank, who have less fear. These are the young women without number. So here too the bridegroom, [seeking] those who are beautiful and able to be his partners, came out from the heavenly bridal chamber. He shares himself with angels and archangels, who are the brides of the Word, and with thrones and lordships.

¹⁰ I went down into the garden of the nut tree, to see among the produce of the torrent, to see if the vine had flowered and if the pomegranates had bloomed. There I will give my breasts to you. [It is a land] like my soul. He set me among the chariots of Aminadab. ¹¹ By way of example, the righteous are nut trees. They bear fruit through their priestly service to God, because they have a hedge around them. The nut has something bitter and bilious, and something else hard, like the trials. Trial may also be called a torrent, as in the saying, “Our soul has passed through a torrent.” So the bride wanted to go down into the garden of the nut tree. That is, having fallen from the [things] of paradise into this toilsome life, she wanted to see some strange offspring of the winter, while a dark river flows. Or, according to Symmachus, she went down to learn whether the gorge of life has [autumn] fruit. She also wanted to see whether the vine had flowered, having escaped the winter and reached the spring, the time of the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. For that is when the vine usually blooms in Judea. She wanted to see also whether the pomegranates had bloomed, whose fruit is

abundant and is enclosed in an orderly way by the rind. The bride's cheek is likened to this. "There," he says, "I will give you my breasts." That is, the ruling part of the soul. But "my soul did not know," she says, and it has failed the promise, being unable to do anything from itself. Yet I was not left behind in these things. For the father of Naasson, the ruler of my people, Aminadab, set me to be his chariots for himself. Naasson is interpreted as "serpent-like," and he is the ruler of the bride's people. This Aminadab, in Numbers, is the father of Naasson, the ruler of the tribe of Judah, who is taken over into Christ, because, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," so, she says, he set me as his chariots, himself driving my thoughts.

¹² "Return, return, Shulammitte; return, return, and we will look upon you."

SECTION 7

¹ "What will you see in the Shulammitte? She who comes like dances of the camps." For she has come up out of the washing, like the ranks of angels. ² Aquila and the fifth edition gave the name as "Soulabitis," meaning "at peace." The bride of the Word is the soul, the Church of Christ, because of the one who made the two one and broke down the dividing wall of the fence. But if the name is "Soulamitis," or "plundered" according to Symmachus, the bridegroom might say to her: "O plundered one, you who came under the power of the one who took you captive, return to your former noble birth." Now she receives the down payment, as the firstfruits of adoption, and the hope of the resurrection. [And if she receives the garment of the promise and of incorruption, the word "return" is repeated more often, as encouragement.] For then, he says, it is truly possible to see you. I think these words are spoken by the companions of the bridegroom to the bride, and the bridegroom answers them, "What will you see?" She is compared to an army of victors. For the one bride has within herself a multitude of camps. The members of the bride are many groups: they are choruses, because they sing praise to the divine in harmony and speak of God to him; and they are camps of peace, because they have brought down their enemies. But the scene is no longer one of war. The friends of the bridegroom call back the one who labored for those in the torrent and was plundered on their account (for "Shulammitte" is interpreted "plundered"). They say, "Return, and we will look upon you." For they saw that her ill-treatment was not fruitless but ended in a good outcome. Those in the torrent had been condemned and

handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Now they have passed through the water of the torrent, and she led them with her as victors. She comes like choruses of camps, like men returning from war, dancing in various groups, singing songs of victory and saying, “Lord, you have crowned us as with a weapon of good will.”

³ “The curves of your thighs are like [little necklaces], the work of a craftsman’s hands.” ⁴ In many places Scripture uses the thighs to speak of generation. So here it shows the bride’s orderliness and fine proportion in the region of generation. It is like necklaces fashioned with virtue. ⁵ “Your navel is a rounded bowl, never lacking mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, fenced in with lilies.” ⁶ Wisdom calls people together to the navel, the bowl, saying, “Come, drink the wine that I have mixed for you.” This points to what is spiritual, [the spiritual Spirit]. The text also adds “a heap of wheat” to signify spiritual food. For “heap” means a gathering of virtues: a multitude brought together into one in harmony. ⁷ The lilies would also be the flowers of the grace of God, which she gathered from among the thorns of life. ⁸ “Your neck is like a tower of ivory.”

⁹ Those who do what pleases the bridegroom were called towers. Their lookout is the contemplative soul, which watches everything from on high. The tower is of ivory because of its brightness and smoothness: nothing rough from wickedness is in the bride’s neck. He no longer said, [concerning the dead], “those who feed among lilies,” for they had come to be above the lilies in the midst of thorns. He also wants us, as lovers of learning, to have a soul that is the daughter of many wise men, and to be at the entrances of many studies, which he called gates. The abundance of the grace of knowledge among the teachers in you is so great, he says, that not only those near you enjoy their instruction, but even those outside and far away already enjoy the benefit of it. ¹⁰ “Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, looking toward the face of Damascus. Your head upon you is like Carmel, and the braid of your head is like purple: a king bound [in the galleries].”

¹¹ Whoever has pure breathing, and through perceiving the divine Word is able to run after him at the fragrance of his ointments, is a nose that senses spiritual sweet smell. He keeps watch to see whether any teaching among the nations seems conspicuous. For Damascus stands for the nations, and the face is a symbol of what is conspicuous and fine. Frankincense is carried up to the altar of God. Carmel is interpreted “knowledge of circumcision.” Whoever

can say with boldness, “We are the circumcision,” knows circumcision. And from the head, that is, from Christ, the knowledge of spiritual circumcision was born. ¹² “Why were you made beautiful, and why made sweet, love, in your delights? This is your greatness: you were made like a palm tree, and your breasts like clusters of grapes.” This is because your mind is lofty, and nothing earthly is carried along with it. ¹³ The bridegroom says this in wonder at her change for the better. A good balance of the elements produces health in bodies. In the same way, a kind of health and beauty comes to the soul from its impulses and aversions. The bride was ugly through wickedness, but she has changed through virtue into beauty. She was bitter, but she has become most pleasant and sweet to him. So he says that, as lavish feasting is the desired thing in bodily delights, love is the desired thing for those who enjoy spiritual delight. [In the other versions the pronoun “your” is placed differently.] He might be saying: “You take more delight in love than in the other fruits of the Spirit, so that for love’s sake you bear all things and endure all things.” Some bodies are small and others large, and in the same way a soul is great or small in proportion to what it accomplishes.

¹⁴ That is, he says, your thoughts are nourishing and good to drink, and not at all sour like unripe grapes. ¹⁵ “Then I will go up into the palm tree. I will take hold of its heights, and your breasts will be like clusters of the vine. The scent of your nose will be like apples, and your throat like good wine, going straight to my beloved, [being made fit] for my lips and teeth.” ¹⁶ Because she has been likened to a palm tree, she calls the bridegroom a palm tree, having understood the height and greatness of the Word. She hoped to go up to this height at the end of the songs, when the bride is perfect. Then she will also take hold of the bridegroom’s breasts, which stand for the closely packed teachings. That is why they are likened to clusters of the vine, of which the Savior said, “I am the true vine.” What comes out of the hidden things of the Word guides and gladdens so much that one can speak when he should, to whom he should, and as much as he should. The lips show speech, and the teeth show restraint in speech. This is in line with the saying, “Make a door and a bar for your mouth, and a measure and a weight for your words.” In such people not only are the thoughts secure, but the lips also are bound by discernment. The good wine is the one brought out of the good treasure of the heart.

¹⁷ “I am my beloved’s, and his turning is toward me.” ¹⁸ This is said of her who has been made perfect: nowhere will he find rest of every kind, wherever he turns himself, as he does with me. “Come, my beloved, let us go out into the field. Let us lodge in the villages. Let us rise early for the vineyards. Let us see whether the vine has flowered, whether the henna blossom has bloomed, whether the pomegranates have bloomed.” ¹⁹ The bride makes her appeal on behalf of the lesser ones, asking him to go out from the innermost, blessed dwelling places to look after them. For these are the field, the villages, the vineyards and the pomegranates.

SECTION 8

¹ “When I find you outside, I will kiss you, and indeed they will not despise me. I will take you along. I will bring you into my mother’s house, into the chamber of her who conceived me. I will give you spiced wine to drink, from the juice of my pomegranates.” ² She found him when he had stepped out from his high place of watching, and she embraced him. ³ “I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and the forces of the field: why do you stir up and rouse up love until it wishes?” ⁴ This is already the second time she has adjured them. But earlier, in her doubt, she put “if” first. Now she has taught the manner of the stirring, the rousing and the love, and she makes it plain, as it were: “In adjuring you I adjured you by these things, that you stir up and rouse up.”

⁵ “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. For love is strong as death, and jealousy is hard as Hades.” ⁶ The bridegroom urges her to shape every thought and action by his own stamp. He says that love, strong as death, does this, for it bears all things and endures all things. It is strong like a death that puts sin to death. Or rather, since death has mastered all things, because in Adam all die, and Hades likewise, he says that love and jealousy are of this kind. This is the jealousy one must have for God, which is hard against those who sin, like that of Elijah and Phinehas. Or the bridegroom says this to her: “Set me as a seal, to seal your thoughts and your actions, and struggle for the truth even to death.” In Hades also the Jews were jealous of Christ, when they bribed the soldiers. “Our sister is little, and she has no breasts.”

⁷ The human soul is small. The church of God, while still being built up on earth, is small too, and does not yet have thoughts (for that is what the breasts are). It grows toward greatness of life and of thoughts, whenever it

makes its thoughts and prophetic insights clear, or has room for the harmony and working of power. [These souls] also say these things together with the spirits of the prophets and the righteous. “You who sit in the gardens, companions are attending to your voice; make me hear. Flee, my kinsman, and be like the gazelle, or the fawn of the deer, upon the mountains of spices.”⁸ The bride saw the bridegroom resting in the gardens, and saw the companions attending to his voice, which she herself had heard. She wants him to turn away from the things of this place, with sharp and penetrating sight. He is to be like a gazelle in speed and keen vision. He is to be like a fawn in holding his enemies in contempt, as one holds snakes and scorpions. And he is to go up to those who have risen like mountains and breathe out every fragrance. Of these it is said, “His foundations are in the holy mountains.” This is the reading of the Seventy, of Theodotion, and of the fifth edition. Aquila, however, gave “the one sitting in gardens.” Symmachus gave “the one dwelling,” [so that the first things are said to the bride, his (?) flowing, listening attentively to her and rejoicing].

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Greek text: Charles de La Rue's edition (Origenis Opera Omnia, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857); Jean Baptiste Pitra's edition (Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata, Paris: A. Jouby et Roger, 1884), digitised by Open Greek and Latin and the First Thousand Years of Greek project (CC BY-SA 4.0). The English is a new translation made by SermonIndex with AI directly from the Greek, as a first reading version; it has not been checked line by line by a person and may contain mistakes. No older English translation was used. Where the digital Greek is flagged as damaged, the English is a best reading. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0. *Licence: CC BY-SA 4.0.*

Selected Notes on the Pentateuch and Other Books

Greek text: >Erich Klostermann's edition (Origenes Werke, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901); Charles de La Rue's edition (Origenis Opera Omnia, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857); Charles de La Rue's edition (Origenis Opera Omnia, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1862), digitised by Open Greek and Latin and the First Thousand Years of Greek project (CC BY-SA 4.0). The English is a new translation made by SermonIndex with AI directly from the Greek, as a first reading version; it has not been checked line by line by a person and may contain mistakes. No older English translation was used. Where the digital Greek is flagged as damaged, the English is a best reading. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0. *Licence: CC BY-SA 4.0.*

Fragments on the Gospel of John

Greek text: Erwin Preuschen's edition (Origenes Werke, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), digitised by Open Greek and Latin and the First Thousand Years of Greek project (CC BY-SA 4.0). The English is a new translation made by SermonIndex with AI directly from the Greek, as a first reading version; it has not been checked line by line by a person and may contain mistakes. No older English translation was used. Where the digital Greek is flagged as damaged, the English is a best reading. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0. *Licence: CC BY-SA 4.0.*

Fragments on the Gospel of Luke

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Scholia on the Gospel of Matthew

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Scholia on the Gospel of Luke

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Scholia on the Song of Songs

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