

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 14

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITINGS

Volume 14

Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory Thaumaturgus,
Methodius and the Writers of the Later Third Century

c. AD 250 – 311

S E R M O N I N D E X

The Early Church Fathers Writings

Volume 14: Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Methodius and the Writers of the Later Third Century

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

How this book is arranged

This is the fourteenth 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 holds Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Methodius and the Writers of the Later Third Century, from the period about AD 250 – 311.

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. The modern English version prepared for SermonIndex is used for Fragments: Against Porphyry, On Created Things, On Job, On Martyrs (Methodius of Olympus); the other works are printed in older public-domain translations.

In this volume

Dionysius was a pupil of Origen and bishop of Alexandria from about AD 247 until his death in AD 264. Little of what he wrote survives whole, but his letters and fragments record the persecutions under Decius and Valerian, the dispute over rebaptism, and his discussion of the authorship of Revelation.

Gregory, called Thaumaturgus, the Wonderworker, was a pupil of Origen and later bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus. His Panegyric on Origen gives a rare first-hand account of how Origen taught.

Theognostus taught in Alexandria in the later third century and wrote the Hypotyposes, or Outlines, of which only fragments remain.

Pierus was a presbyter and teacher at Alexandria in the later third century.

Theonas was bishop of Alexandria in the last decades of the third century.

Anatolius came from Alexandria, was known for his learning in mathematics and philosophy, and became bishop of Laodicea in Syria. He is remembered for his work on the date of Easter.

Phileas was bishop of Thmuis in Egypt and was put to death in the persecution of AD 306.

Malchion was a priest of Antioch and a teacher of rhetoric who debated Paul of Samosata at the council of Antioch in AD 268.

Alexander of Lycopolis was a philosopher in the Platonist tradition who wrote a short work against the teaching of Mani, about AD 300.

The *Derision of Gentile Philosophers* is a short satire on the disagreements of the Greek philosophers. Its author is otherwise unknown and its date is uncertain.

The Syriac documents of Edessa gather legends and records of the church in that city, among them the story of King Abgar and the teaching of Addai, and the acts of its early martyrs. They are a mixture of history and tradition, and the introduction to each states what is known of it.

Victorinus was bishop of Pettau in Pannonia and died as a martyr about AD 304. His commentary on Revelation is the earliest in Latin.

Pamphilus was a presbyter and scholar at Caesarea in Palestine, the friend and teacher of Eusebius. He was martyred in AD 309.

Methodius was a bishop in Asia Minor and a martyr, who died about AD 311. His *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* is a dialogue in praise of virginity, and several of his other works take issue with parts of Origen's teaching.

The *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* is a dialogue in praise of virginity made up of eleven discourses. The fourth discourse is not in the text used for this book, so the sequence passes from the third to the fifth.

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

Alexandria and the School of Origen

*Bishops and teachers of Alexandria and Pontus, who came
after Origen.*

Letters and Treatises

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. AD 264

The letters of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (AD 247–264), most of them preserved in Eusebius's Church History, with the extracts of his treatises *On the Promises*, *On Nature and Refutation and Defence*. The editor's introduction and notes are left out.

TO FABIAN, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH (EUS., H. E. VI. 41, 42, AND 44)

1(1) The persecution did not begin amongst us with the Imperial edict; for it anticipated that by a whole year. And the prophet and poet of evil to this city, whoever he was, was beforehand in moving and exciting the heathen crowds against us, rekindling their zeal for the national superstitions. So they being aroused by him and availing themselves of all lawful authority for their unholy doings, conceived that the only piety, the proper worship of their gods was this—to thirst for our blood. First, then, they carried off an old man, Metras, and bade him utter impious words, and when he refused they beat his body with sticks and stabbed his face and eyes with sharp bulrushes as they led him into the outskirts of the city and there stoned him. Then they led a believer named Quinta to the idol-house and tried to make her kneel down, and, when she turned away in disgust, they bound her by the feet and hauled her right through the city over the rough pavement, the big stones bruising her poor body, and at the same time beat her till they reached the same spot, and there stoned her. Thereupon they all with one consent made a rush on the houses of the believers, and, falling each upon those whom they recognized as neighbours, plundered, harried and despoiled them, setting aside the more valuable of their possessions and casting out into the streets and burning the cheaper things and such as were made of wood, till they produced the appearance of a city devastated by the enemy. But the brethren gave way and submitted and accepted the plundering of their possessions with joy like unto those of whom Paul also testified. And I

know not if any, save possibly a single one who fell into their hands, up till now has denied the Lord.

² Another notable case was that of the aged virgin Apollonia, whom they seized and knocked out all her teeth, striking her on the jaws: then they made a pyre before the city and threatened to burn her alive, if she would not join them in uttering blasphemies. But she asked for a brief respite, and being let go, suddenly leapt into the fire and was devoured by the flames. Sarapion, also, they caught in his own house, and after outraging him with cruel tortures and crushing all his limbs, they cast him headlong from the upper storey. And we could go by no high road, thoroughfare, or byway, either by day or by night; for everywhere and always there was a constant cry that any one who did not utter words of blasphemy must be dragged off and burnt. ³ And this state of things prevailed for some time, till the revolution and civil war occupied the attention of these unhappy men and turned on one another their fury against us. And so we had a short breathing space, as they found no leisure for raging against us: but very soon the overthrow of the ruler who had been not unfavourable to us is announced, and our grave fears of being attacked are renewed. And, in fact, the edict arrived, which was itself almost to be compared with that foretold by the Lord, well-nigh the most terrible of all, so as to cause, if possible, even the elect to stumble. Nevertheless all were panic-stricken, and numbers at once of those who were in higher positions, some came forward in fear, and some who held public posts were led by their official duties; others, again, were brought in by those about them, and when their names were called, approached the impure and unholy sacrifices; pale and trembling in some cases as if they were not going to sacrifice but themselves become sacrifices and victims to the idols, so that they incurred ridicule from the large crowd that stood by, and proved themselves to be utter cowards both in regard to death and in regard to sacrificing, whilst others ran readily up to the altar, making it plain by their forwardness that they had not been Christians even before. About such the Lord's prediction is most true that with difficulty shall they be saved.

⁴ And of the rest some followed one or other of the above, while others fled or were captured: and of these last, again, some after going as far as chains and imprisonment, and even after being immured several days in certain cases, still, before coming into court, forswore themselves; and others, even after enduring some amount of torment, failed at the last. But the

steadfast and blessed pillars of the Lord, being strengthened by Him and receiving due and proportionate power and endurance for the mighty Faith that was in them, proved themselves admirable witnesses of His Kingdom. Foremost among them was Julian, a sufferer from gout, unable to stand or walk; he was brought up with two others, who carried him, of whom the one straightway denied the Faith; the other, Cronion by name, but surnamed Eunous (well-disposed), and the old man Julian himself confessed the Lord and were conveyed on camel's back, and scourged as they rode right through the city—big though it be, as ye know—and at last were burnt with fire unquenchable, whilst all the people stood round. And a soldier who stood by as they were carried along and protested against those who insulted them was denounced and brought up, to wit God's brave warrior Besas, and after heroic conduct in the great war of piety was beheaded. And yet another, a Libyan by race, who rightly and happily was named Mauar (happy), though the judge urged him strongly to renounce the Faith, would not give in, and so was burnt alive.

5 After them Epimachus and Alexander, when they had remained a long time in bonds and had endured endless tortures from the "claws" and scourges, were also consumed with fire unquenchable. And with them four women: Ammonarion, a holy virgin, though the judge tortured her vigorously for a long time because she had declared beforehand that she would say nothing that he bade her, kept true to her promise and was led off to punishment; and of the rest there was the aged and reverend Mercuria and Dionysia, who, though she had many children, did not love them above the Lord: these the Prefect was ashamed to go on torturing in vain and be beaten by women, and so they died by the sword without further tortures: for the brave Ammonarion had exhausted all their devices. 6 Then were delivered up three Egyptians: Heron, Ater and Isidore, and with them Dioscorus, a lad of about fifteen. And first of all the Prefect tried to cajole the stripling with words, thinking he could easily be won over, and then to force him by torments, thinking he would soon give in, but Dioscorus was neither persuaded nor forced. So the others he cruelly lacerated, and when they, too, stood firm, handed them over to the fire; but Dioscorus, who had distinguished himself in public and had answered his private questionings most wisely, he let off, saying that he granted him a reprieve for repenting, on account of his age. And now the godly Dioscorus is still with us, having waited for his

longer trial and his more determined conflict. Another Egyptian, Nemesion, was falsely accused of being an associate of brigands, but being accused of that most untrue charge before the centurion, he was then denounced as a Christian and came in chains before the Prefect. And he having most unjustly maltreated him with twice as many tortures and stripes as the brigands had received, burnt him to death between them, being honoured, happy man, by the example of Christ.

7 Again a whole quaternion of soldiers—Ammon, Zenon, Ptolemy and Ingenuus, and an old man, Theophilus, with them, were standing before the judgment seat, whilst some one was being tried for being a Christian, and when he showed signs of denying the Faith they were so provoked as they stood by, nodding their heads, and stretching out their hands and making gestures with their bodies, that they drew the general attention to themselves, and then, before any could seize them, they leapt upon the stand of their own accord, saying they were Christians, so that the Prefect and his assessors were frightened, and those who were being judged seemed to take courage over what awaited them, and their judges lost heart. So these soldiers walked in brave procession from the court and rejoiced in their witness (martyrdom), God giving them a glorious triumph. 8(2) And many others in the cities and villages were torn asunder by the heathen (Gentiles), one of which I will mention as an example. Ischyriion acted as steward to one of the authorities at a wage. His employer bade him sacrifice, ill-treated him when he refused, and on his persistence drove him forth with insults: when he still stood his ground, he took a big stick and killed him by driving it through his vital parts. What need to mention the multitude of those who wandered in deserts and mountains consumed by hunger and thirst and cold and diseases and brigands and wild beasts? the survivors of whom bear witness to their election and victory. Of these, also, I will bring forward one instance by way of illustration. Chæremon was the aged Bishop of what is called Nilopolis. He fled to the Arabian hills with his wife and never returned, nor were they ever seen again by the brethren, who made long search, but found neither them nor their bodies. And there were many who on those very Arabian hills were sold into slavery by the barbarian Saracens, of whom some were with difficulty ransomed at high sums, and others even yet have not been ransomed. And these things I have described at length, brother, not without purpose, but in order that thou mightest know how many terrible

things have taken place amongst us, of which those who have had more experience will know of more cases than I do.

9 Then shortly after he proceeds— (3) Accordingly, the holy martyrs themselves, when still amongst us, who are now the assessors of Christ and partners of His Kingdom, sharing His judgments and decisions, espoused the cause of certain of the fallen brethren who had incurred the charge of having done sacrifice, and seeing their conversion and repentance and approving it as fit to be accepted by Him who desireth not at all the death of the sinner so much as his repentance, received them, summoned them to assemblies, introduced them and admitted them to the prayers and feasts. What, then, do ye counsel us in these matters, brethren? What ought we to do? Shall we acquiesce and assent to them and maintain their decision and concession and treat kindly those to whom they have extended mercy? or shall we hold their judgment wrong and set ourselves up as critics of their decision and vex their kind hearts and reverse their arrangement?

10 [A further extract on the subject of the lapsed] I will set out the following single example that happened amongst us. There was a certain aged believer amongst us, Sarapion, who had lived blamelessly for a long time but yielded to temptation. This man often begged to be restored, but no one heeded him; for he had sacrificed. But he fell ill, and for three days in succession he remained speechless and unconscious. Then recovering a little on the fourth day, he called to him his nephew and said: “How long, my child, do ye keep me back? hasten ye, I pray, and let me go speedily. Call thou one of the elders (presbyters).” After this he became speechless again. The boy ran for the elder, but it was night and he was ill and could not come. Now I had given instructions that if those who were departing life asked and especially when they chanced to have made supplication even before, they should be absolved in order that they might depart in good hope; he gave the boy, therefore, a morsel of the Eucharist, bidding him moisten it and drop it into the old man’s mouth. The lad went back with it. When he drew near, before he entered, Sarapion revived again and said: “Hast come, child? The presbyter could not come, but do thou quickly what he bade thee, and let me go.” So the boy moistened it and dropped it into his mouth: and the other shortly after swallowing it straightway gave up the ghost. Was he not clearly sustained and kept alive until he was absolved that, with his sin wiped out, he

might be acknowledged (by the Lord) for the many good things he had done?

TO GERMANUS A BISHOP (EUS., H. E. VI. 40 AND VII. 11)

¹(1) Now before God I speak and He knoweth if I lie; not at all on my own judgment nor yet without Divine guidance did I take flight, but on a former occasion also as soon as ever the persecution under Decius was set up, Sabinus sent a frumentarius to seek me; and I awaited his arrival at my house for four days, while he went round searching everywhere, the streams, the roads and the fields, where he suspected me to hide or go, but he never lighted on my house, being held by blindness: for he did not believe I should stay at home under pursuit. And hardly after the four days when God bade me remove and unexpectedly made a way for me, I and the boys and many of the brethren went out together. And this was ordered by the Providence of God, as after events have shown, in which perchance we have been useful to some.

²Further on he proceeds— (2) For about sunset I with my companions having fallen into the hands of the soldiers, was taken to Taposiris, but Timotheus by the Providence of God happened not to be present nor to be caught elsewhere. But arriving afterwards, he found the house empty and servants guarding it, and us carried off prisoners. And further on— ³(3) And what is the manner of His wonderful dispensation? for only the truth shall be spoken. One of the rustics met Timotheus as he was fleeing and troubled, and inquired the reason of his haste. And he told the truth, and when the other heard it (now he was going to a marriage revel: for it is their custom to pass the whole night at such gatherings), he entered and informed those who were reclining at table. And they with one consent as if at a signal all arose and came running at great speed and fell upon us with loud cries, and when the soldiers who were guarding us straightway took to flight, they came upon us just as we were reclining on the bare bedsteads. And I indeed, God wot, taking them at first to be bandits who had come for plunder and ravage, remained on the couch where I was, undressed save for my linen undergarment, and began to offer them the rest of my raiment which was at my side. But they bade me rise and go out as quickly as I could. And then I, understanding why they had come, cried out begging and praying them to depart and leave us, and if they would do us a good turn, I besought them to forestall those who had carried me off and cut off my head themselves. And while I thus cried, as they know who shared and took part in everything,

they raised me by force, and when I let myself down on my back to the ground, they took and led me out, dragging me by the arms and legs. And there followed me those who had been witnesses of all this, Gaius, Faustus, Peter and Paul, and they also helped to carry me out of the township in their arms, and then putting me on a barebacked ass, led me away.

4 [Another extract from the same letter given by Eusebius in another part of his History, and referring to a somewhat later period in Dionysius's life]
5 (4) I am really in danger of falling into much foolishness and want of right feeling through being compelled of necessity to narrate God's wondrous dispensation concerning us. But since "it is good," it says, "to keep close the secret of a king but glorious to reveal the works of God," I will come to close quarters with our violent accuser, Germanus. I came before Æmilian not alone; for there followed with me my fellow-presbyter Maximus, and deacons Faustus, Eusebius and Chæremon. And one of the brethren who was present from Rome came in with us. Now Æmilian did not say to me at the start, "Do not summon" (the brethren for public worship): for that was superfluous and the last thing (to insist on), since he was going back to the very beginning of the matter. For the question was not about summoning others but about not being Christians ourselves, and it was from this that he bade us desist, thinking that if I should change my mind, the others would follow me. And I answered not unsuitably nor yet very differently from the words: "We ought to obey God rather than men," but I testified outright that I worship the only God and none other, nor will I ever alter nor desist from being a Christian. Upon this he bade us go away to a village on the borders of the desert named Cephro. Listen then to what was said on both sides as it was (officially) recorded:

6 Dionysius, Faustus, Maximus, Marcellus and Chæremon being brought in, Æmilian the Prefect said: "In the course of conversation also I described to you the clemency which our Sovereigns have displayed towards you. For they gave you opportunity of being liberated if you would adopt a natural line of conduct and worship the gods who protect the Empire and give up those who are contrary to nature. What say ye then to this? for I do not expect you will be ungrateful for their clemency when they invite you to a better course. Dionysius answered: "It is not a fact that all men worship all gods, for each worships certain whom he believes in. So with us, we worship and adore the One God, the Creator of all things, who has entrusted the Empire

also to the most religious Emperors, Valerian and Gallienus; and to Him we pray without ceasing for their Empire that it may abide unshaken.” Æmilian the Prefect said, “But who prevents you from worshipping him also, if he be god, with the natural gods? for you were ordered to worship gods and those which all know. Dionysius answered: “We worship none other but Him.” Æmilian the Prefect said to them: “I observe that you together are both ungrateful and insensible of the leniency of our Emperors. Wherefore ye shall not be in this city but shall be dismissed to the parts of Libya and stay in a place called Cephro, which I have chosen at the bidding of our Emperors.

7 And both you and others will be absolutely forbidden either to hold meetings or to enter the cemeteries so-called. And if any one were to appear not to have arrived at the place I have ordered or were found at any assembly, he will do so at his own risk. For the necessary penalty will not be wanting. Be off therefore where ye were bidden. So he hurried me away even though I was sick, granting me not a day’s respite. What leisure, then, had I to call assemblies or not? 8 Further on he says— 9(5) But we did not abstain even from the visible assembling of ourselves together in the Lord’s presence, but those who were in the city (Alexandria) I the more earnestly urged to assemble, as if I were still with them, being absent in the body, as it says, but present in the spirit. And at Cephro also a large number of the Church were sojourning with us, consisting of the brethren who had followed us from the city or were present from other parts of Egypt. There, too, the Lord opened us a door for the word. And at first we were pursued and stoned, but later not a few of the Gentiles left their idols and turned to God. Thus the word was first sown through us in their hearts who had not previously received it. And as it were for this cause God having led us to them, led us away again when we had fulfilled this ministry. For Æmilian wished, as it seemed, to transfer us to rougher and more Libyan-like parts, and bade those who were scattered in every direction to draw together to the Mareotis, assigning to each party one of the villages of the district, but us he put more on the road so that we should be the first to be arrested. For he evidently managed and arranged so that he might have us easy of capture whenever he wished to seize us.

10 And as for me, when I was ordered to depart to Cephro, I did not even know in what direction the place lay, hardly having heard so much as the name before; and yet I went off willingly and without trouble. But when it was told me that they would remove me to the parts of Colluthion, all who

were present know how I was affected. For here I will accuse myself. At first I was vexed and took it very ill. For though the place happened to be better known and more familiar to us, yet people said it was devoid of brethren and respectable folk, being exposed to the annoyances of wayfarers and the attacks of robbers. But I found consolation when the brethren reminded me that it is nearer to the city, and that, while Cephro gave much opportunity of intercourse with brethren from Egypt in general, so that one could draw congregations from a wider area, yet at Colluthion we should more constantly enjoy the sight of those who were really loved and most intimate and dear. For they would be able to come and stay the night and there would be district-meetings as is the case with outlying suburbs. And so it turned out.

¹¹ And lower down again he writes this about what had happened to him — (6) Many indeed are the confessions of faith over which Germanus prides himself: many are the things which he has to mention as having happened to him. Can he reckon up as many in his own case as I can in mine—condemnations, confiscations, sales by public auction, spoiling of one's possessions, loss of dignities, despisings of worldly honour, contempt of commendations by Prefects and Councils and of opponents' threats, endurance of clamourings and dangers and persecutions and wanderings and tribulations and much affliction, such as are the things which have happened unto me under Decius and Sabinus and up to the present time under Æmilian? But where did Germanus appear? What talk was there of him? However, I withdraw from the much foolishness into which I am falling through Germanus; wherefore I refrain from giving a detailed account of events to the brethren who know all.

(TO NOVATIAN) (EUS., H. E. VI. 45)

If it was against thy will, as thou sayest, that thou wast promoted, thou wilt prove this by retiring of thine own accord. It were good to suffer anything and everything so to escape dividing the Church of God. And martyrdom to avoid schism is no less glorious than martyrdom to avoid idolatry. Nay, it is to my mind greater. In one case a man is a martyr for his own single soul's sake. But this is for the whole Church. Even now wast thou to persuade or constrain the brethren to come to one mind, thy true deed were greater than thy fall. This will not be reckoned to thee, the other will be lauded. And if thou shouldest be powerless to sway disobedient spirits, save, save thine own soul. I pray for thy health and thy steadfast cleaving to peace in the Lord. [I

have to thank the editors and publishers for leave to reprint the above translation by Archbishop Benson from his Cyprian, p. 142.]

TO CORNELIUS, BISHOP OF ROME, IN REPLY TO A LETTER FROM HIM
ABOUT NOVATIAN (CIRC. 253)

Eusebius (H. E. vi. 46) quotes only one short sentence from Dionysius's letter, which refers to the death of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, one of Origen's distinguished pupils and supporters. Alexander twice boldly confessed Christ in the Governor's Court at Cæsarea and died at last in prison. The sentence is as follows— "The admirable Alexander entered into a blessed rest whilst in custody." According to Eusebius, the letter also mentioned the invitation which Dionysius had received from the Bishops of Asia Minor to attend a synod at Antioch at which "they tried to suppress the schism of Novatian."

TO STEPHANUS, BISHOP OF ROME (EUS., H. E. VII. 4 AND 5) (THE FIRST
OF THE EPISTLES ABOUT BAPTISM)

1 (1) Know now, brother, that all the Churches in the East and even further afield which were divided, have been united: and all their rulers everywhere are of one mind, rejoicing exceedingly at the unexpected peace which has come about, Demetrian in Antioch, Theoctistus in Cæsarea, Mazabbanes in Ælia, Marinus in Tyre, Alexander having fallen asleep, Heliodorus in Laodicea, Thelymidrus being at rest, Helenus in Tarsus and all the Churches of Cilicia, Firmilianus and all Cappadocia. For I have mentioned only the more prominent of the Bishops, in order that I may not make my letter too long nor my narrative wearisome. Nevertheless, the whole of Syria and Arabia, districts whose needs ye from time to time supply and to whom ye now have sent an epistle, Mesopotamia also and Pontus and Bithynia, and, in one word, all men everywhere exult in the harmony and brotherly love displayed and praise God for it.

2 [The two following extracts are translated from Syriac versions, and I am indebted for them to Mr. N. MacLean of Christ's College, Cambridge. The first has been put together out of two MSS. in the British Museum, neither of which contains the whole, and was printed by Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, Vol. IV. The Greek original of most of the first sentence is preserved in a catena on Deuteronomy, Cod. Vat. 1521, fol. 591, and was first printed by Simon de Magistris in his edition of our author, p. 200. There is much probability that this extract formed part of the same letter to Stephanus as the extract from Eusebius which precedes it here. The second extract is found in

three other Syriac MSS. in the British Museum, but is less certainly part of this letter, or indeed authentic at all.] ³(2) If so be that any man speak a wicked thing of God like those who call Him unpitiful or any man living in the fear of other gods, the Law has commanded that such a one be stoned: but we would stone these men with sound words of faith. Or if a man receive not at all the mystery of Christ or alter and distort it—(saying) that He is not God, or that he did not become a man, or that He did not die, or that He did not rise, or that He will not come to judge the quick and the dead—or preach anything else apart from what we preached, let him be a curse, says Paul. Or if so be he have wronged the word concerning the resurrection of the flesh, let him be already reckoned with the dead. For we speak in carefulness concerning these things—in order that we may be in agreement one with another, churches with churches, bishops with bishops, priests with priests. And in regard to causes and affairs about matters which concern individual men—how it is right to receive him who approaches from without and how him who comes from within—we counsel to obey those who stand at the head of every place who by Divine election are put into this ministration—leaving to our Lord the judgment of all things which they do.

⁴(3) Those who were baptized in the name of the three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—though they were baptized by heretics who confess the three Persons, shall not be re-baptized. But those who are converted from other heresies shall be perfected by the baptism of the Holy Church.

TO XYSTUS (OR SIXTUS) II (EUS., H. E. VII. 5, 3-6) (THE SECOND ON THE SAME SUBJECT)

¹(1) (Stephen) therefore had sent word concerning Helenus and concerning Firmilianus, and all the bishops of Cilicia and Cappadocia and (be it noted) of Galatia and all the neighbouring churches likewise—to the effect that he would not hold communion with them for this same reason, since, he says, they re-baptize the heretics. And observe the importance of the matter. For decrees had really been passed about it in the largest synods of the bishops, as I am informed, so that those who come over from heretical bodies, after a course of instruction, are washed and cleansed from the defilement of the old and unclean leaven. About all this also I have written asking him for information. (2) To our beloved fellow-presbyters also, Dionysius and Philemon, who had formerly sided with Stephanus and were correspondents of

mine on the same matter, I have written briefly the first time and more fully now.

²(3) The teaching which is now at work in Ptolemais of Pentapolis, is impious, full of blasphemy about the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and full of unbelief about His only begotten Son, the First-born of all creation, the Incarnate Word, and displays want of perception concerning the Holy Spirit. And therefore, when both official communications from both parties arrived and some of the brethren sought personal interviews with me, I wrote what I could by the Divine assistance and gave a somewhat methodical explanation of the matter, a copy of which I have sent you.

TO PHILEMON (EUS., H. E. VII. 7) (THE THIRD ON THE SAME SUBJECT)

¹(1) I read both the critical researches and the traditional treatises of the heretics, defiling my soul a little with their abominable opinions and yet gaining this advantage from them, that I could refute them for myself and abhor them much more thoroughly. And indeed when a certain brother among the presbyters tried to restrain me and frighten me from contaminating myself with the mire of their iniquity (he said I should ruin my soul, and, as I perceived, there was truth in what he said), a heaven-sent vision came and strengthened me, and words came to me which expressly ordered me thus: "Read all that may come to thy hands: for thou art competent to sift and test everything, and that was the original reason of thy accepting the Faith." I acknowledged the vision as in agreement with the apostolic voice which says to the more able: "Approve yourselves bankers of repute."

²(2) This cause and rule I received from our blessed Father Heraclas. For those that came over from the heretics, although they had apostatized from the Church—or rather had not even done that but were informed against as resorting to some heretical teacher, though still reputed members of our congregations—these he repelled from the Church, and did not restore them at their request until they had publicly and fully stated all that they had heard among those who set themselves against us; and then he admitted them without requiring them to be re-baptized: for they had received that holy gift already. (3) I have learnt this also, that the brethren in Africa did not introduce this practice (of re-baptism) now for the first time, but it was also adopted some time ago among our predecessors as Bishops, in the most populous churches and well-attended synods of the brethren, viz. in Iconium

and Synnada, and I cannot bring myself to reverse their decisions and involve them in strife and controversy. For “thou shalt not remove,” it says, “thy neighbour’s boundaries, which thy fathers set.”

TO DIONYSIUS OF ROME (EUS., H. E. VII. 7, 6 AND 8) (THE FOURTH
LETTER ON BAPTISM)

For with Novatian we are reasonably indignant, seeing that he has cut the Church in two and dragged certain of the brethren into impieties and blasphemies and introduced the most unholy teaching about God and accuses the most gracious Jesus Christ our Lord of being without pity, and besides all this sets at nought the holy laws and overthrows the confession of faith before baptism, and altogether banishes the Holy Spirit from them, even though there were some hope of His remaining or even of His returning to them.

TO XYSTUS (SIXTUS) II, BISHOP OF ROME (EUS., H. E. VII. 9) (THE
FIFTH ABOUT BAPTISM)

I truly desire counsel, brother, and ask an opinion from you, being afraid lest after all I am wrong in my treatment of a case that has come before me as follows— One who is reckoned faithful among the brethren who meet together, of old standing, having been a member even before my ordination (as Bishop), and I fancy even before the appointment of the blessed Heraclas, had been present at a recent baptism and heard the questions and answers (in that service). He came to me weeping and bemoaning himself and falling at my feet, confessing and protesting that the baptism he had received among the heretics was not this, nor had anything in common with it: for that was full of impiety and blasphemies: and he said that he was now sore pricked in the soul and had no courage even to lift up his eyes to God, because he had started with such unholy words and rites, and so he begged to obtain this thorough means of purification and acceptance and grace. But this I did not venture to do, saying that his so long being in communion with us was sufficient for the purpose. For as he had heard the Giving of Thanks (Eucharist) and joined in saying the Amen, and stood at the Table and stretched forth his hands to receive the holy Food and had taken it and partaken of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for a considerable period, I should not venture to put him back to the beginning once more. So I bade him take courage and approach for the receiving of the Holy Things with sure faith and good hope. But he ceases not to grieve, and shrinks from approaching

the Table and can with difficulty be persuaded to stand with (the Consistentes) for the Prayers.

TO CONON (PITRA, SPIC. SOL. I. 15, FROM A BODL. MS. DATED 1062)

As to those who are nearing the end of life, if they desire and beg to obtain absolution, having before their eyes the judgment to which they are departing, considering what is in store for them, if they are handed over thereto bound and condemned, and believing that they will gain relief and lightening of punishment there, if they be loosed here—for these the approval of the Lord is true and assured—these, too, it is part of the Divine mercy to send on their way free. If, however, they afterwards continue to live, it does not appear to me consistent to bind them again and load them with their sins. For when once absolved and reconciled to God, and pronounced again to be partakers of Divine grace and dispatched as free to appear before the Lord, so long as nothing wrong has been done by them in the meantime to bring them back into bondage for their sins were most unreasonable. Shall we after that impose on God the limits of our judgment, to be kept by Him while we observe them not ourselves, making parade of the goodness of the Lord but withholding our own? Nevertheless if any one, after recovery, should show himself in need of further treatment, we counsel him, of his own accord, to humble and abase and lower himself, with a view to his own improvement and also to what is seemly in the eyes of the brethren and irreproachable before those without. If he consent to this, he will be the gainer: but, if he should object and refuse, then no doubt that will be a sufficient ground for a second exclusion.

FROM THE WRITINGS ABOUT REPENTANCE (MAI, CLASS. AUCT. X. 484,
FROM A VAT. MS.)

But now we do the contrary. For him whom Christ in His goodness seeks when wandering upon the mountains, and calls to Himself when fleeing, and lays upon His shoulders when found at last, him we resolutely repel when he approaches. Nay, let us not adopt so evil a counsel for our own sake, nor drive the sword into our own heart. For they that endeavour to injure or, on the other hand, to benefit others, may not altogether have the effect they desired upon them, but they do bring about good or evil for themselves and replenish their store either of heavenly virtues or of undisciplined affections. And these taking good angels as their companions and fellow-travellers, both here and hereafter, in all peace and freedom from every evil, will be al-

lotted the most blessed inheritances for eternity and will ever be with God, the greatest good of all; and those will forfeit at once the peace of God and their own peace, and both here and after death will be handed over to tormenting demons. Let us then not repel those who return, but gladly welcome them and number them with those who have not strayed, and thus supply that which is wanting in them.

TO DOMITIUS AND DIDYMUS (EUS., H. E. VII. 11) (PART OF AN EASTER LETTER)

1(1) It is superfluous to mention by name the many members of our body, who are unknown to you: but you should know that men and women, young and old, soldiers and civilians, every class and age, some by the scourge and fire and some by the sword have conquered in the fight and carried off their crowns, while with some even a very long period did not prove sufficient to show them acceptable to the Lord (as martyrs), as in fact seems to be the case even now with me. Wherefore I have been put off until a time which He Himself knows to be the right one by Him who saith: "In a time acceptable I heard thee, and in the day of salvation I succoured thee." For since you inquire and wish to be informed how we fare, by all means hear our experiences: how that when we were being led away prisoners by a centurion and duumviri with their soldiers and servants, viz. myself and Gaius, Faustus, Peter and Paul, certain of the inhabitants of the Mareotis came upon us, and with violence dragged us off against our will and in spite of our protests. And now I with Gaius and Peter only, deprived of the company of the other brethren, am shut in a desolate and dreary part of Libya, three days' journey from Parætonium.

2 And further on he says— (2) In the city there have concealed themselves, secretly looking after the brethren, from among the presbyters Maximus, Dioscorus, Demetrius and Lucius (for Faustinus and Aquila, who were better known in the world, are wandering in other parts of Egypt), and of the deacons Faustus, Eusebius and Chæremon, who survived those who perished in the pestilence. Eusebius was he whom from the beginning God strengthened and inspired to perform many services for the confessors in prison with all energy, and to carry out at no small risk the last offices for the perfect and blessed martyrs in decking out their bodies (for burial). For up till now the Prefect does not cease from cruelly slaying some of those who are brought before him, as I have already said, and from tearing others in

pieces with instruments of torture, while he crushes the spirits of others again with chains and imprisonment, forbidding any to visit them and making search lest any should be found doing so. Nevertheless, God gives them some respite from their miseries through the zeal and steadfast efforts of the brethren.

TO HERMAMMON (EUS., H. E. VII. 1, 10, 23) (PART OF ANOTHER
EASTER LETTER)

¹(1) Even Gallus did not know the flaw in Decius's policy, nor did he foresee what it was that upset him, but stumbled over the same stone that was right before his eyes. For, though his reign was prospering and things were going according to his mind, he drove into exile the holy men who were interceding with God for his peace and health, with the effect that with them he drove out also their prayers on his behalf. So far on that point, and then again he discourses about Valerian in the same letter— ²(2) To John also it is revealed in like manner, when he says: "There was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy, and there was given him authority and forty-two months." And both these things are to be wondered at in the case of Valerian, and of them it is especially to be observed how his prosperity lasted so long as he was gentle and well-disposed towards the men of God. For none of the Emperors before him were so kindly and favourably affected towards them, not even those who were said to have been openly Christians, as he manifestly was, receiving them at the beginning in a most familiar and friendly spirit: indeed, his whole house was filled with devout persons and was a veritable Church of God. But he was persuaded to abandon this treatment by that tutor and chief ruler of Egyptian magicians, who instructed him to slay or persecute, as adversaries and hinderers of his vile and detestable sorcerers, the pure and holy persons, who are and were able to confound the devices of accursed demons by being present and seen and merely breathing on them and uttering words, while he also incited him to perform unholy rites and detestable juggleries and abominable sacrifices such as the killing of wretched boys and the slaying of unhappy fathers' children and the dividing of new-born entrails asunder and the cutting up and mutilating of bodies which are God's creation, in the hope that such doings would bring them Divine favour.

³And to this he adds as follows— (3) Fine offerings at all events did Macrianus make to them (sc. the demons) to propitiate them for the Empire

which he hoped for, when, in his former position as so-called officer in charge of the Emperor's general (καθόλου) accounts he entertained no reasonable (εὐλογον) nor catholic (καθολικόν) sentiments, but fell under the prophet's curse, who says: "Woe to those who prophesy out of their own heart and see not the general (τὸ καθόλου) view." For he did not understand the workings of Universal (καθόλου) Providence, nor suspect the approach of Judgment on the part of Him who is before all things and through all things and over all things. Wherefore he has become also the enemy of His universal (καθολικῆς) Church and has alienated and estranged himself from God's mercy and banished himself as far as possible from his own salvation, verifying in this his personal name.

4 And again further on he says— (4) For Valerian, through being persuaded to this policy by him, exposed himself to insults and injuries according to that which was said to Isaiah: "And these men chose their ways and their abominations which their soul desired, and I will choose their mockings and will recompense them their sins." But this man (Macrianus) in his mad lust after imperial power for which he had no qualifications, being unable to deck his own crippled body with the imperial robes, put forward his two sons, who thus became liable for their father's sins. For the prophecy clearly applies to them which God spake: "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." For he brought upon his sons' heads his own evil desires in which he had succeeded and involved them in the consequences of his own wickedness and hatred of God.

5 Then there is a section in which he refers to the peaceful times under Gallienus— (5) So after thus inciting one of the Emperors before him and attacking the other, he speedily vanished with all his family, root and branch, whilst Gallienus was proclaimed and acknowledged by all, being at once the old and the new Emperor, having preceded the usurpers and remaining after them. For, in accordance with that which was spoken to the prophet Isaiah, "behold the things predicted from the beginning have come to pass, and new things which will now arise." For as a cloud having overcast the sun's rays and screened them for a while shades it and shows itself in its stead, and then when the cloud has passed off or been dissipated the sun which was shining before emerges and shines forth again, so it is with Macrianus; after coming forward and gaining access for himself to the imperial

power which belonged to Gallienus, he ceases to be, since he was of no account, and the other resumes the position he had before. And the Empire, having cast off, as it were, its old age and purged itself of its former badness, now bursts into greater splendour, is seen and heard from afar and pervades the whole world.

6 Then in due order he indicates the date of this letter in these words—
(6) And once more it occurs to me to consider the days and years of this period of the Empire. For I observe that the ungodly persons (I have mentioned) after a short period of honourable mention have lost their good name, but (Gallienus) who was more righteous and loved God better, having completed the seven years' period, is now passing through his ninth year: therefore let us keep the Feast.

TO THE BRETHREN IN ALEXANDRIA (EUS., H. E. VII. 22) (PART OF
ANOTHER EASTER LETTER)

1(1) Other men would not think the present a time for "keeping festival: nor, indeed, is this nor any other such a time to them; I speak not of times obviously sorrowful, but even of such as they might consider most joyful. In these days there are lamentations everywhere, and all are mourning: wailings resound through the city by reason of the number of the dead and the dying day by day. For, as it is written about the firstborn of the Egyptians, so now also "a great cry arose: for there is not a house in which there is not one dead. I would, indeed, there were but one; for the things that have before now befallen us were truly many and grievous. First of all they drove us into exile and we kept the feast then too by ourselves, persecuted and harried to death by all, and every place where each particular affliction befel us became the scene of our festal assembly, open country, desert, ship, inn or prison, and our perfect martyrs spent the brightest of all feasts, being entertained in heaven above. But after this war and famine seized us, which we endured in common with the Gentiles, having undergone alone all the injuries they had inflicted on us and then having to share in the evils they wrought on one another and suffered: and once more we rejoiced in the peace of Christ, which He has given to us alone.

2 But now after we and they had obtained a very brief respite, this pestilence has overtaken us, which is to them a more fearful thing than all former fears and more terrible than any calamity whatever, and to quote an expression of an historian of their own, "a thing which alone has exceeded

all men's expectation," while to us it was not so much that as a discipline and a testing no less severe than any of the rest: for it did not spare us, though it attacked the Gentiles in great force. ³ To this he adds as follows— (2) At all events most of the brethren through their love and brotherly affection for us spared not themselves nor abandoned one another, but without regard to their own peril visited those who fell sick, diligently looking after and ministering to them and cheerfully shared their fate with them, being infected with the disease from them and willingly involving themselves in their troubles. Not a few also, after nursing others back to recovery, died themselves, taking death over from them and thus fulfilling in very deed the common saying, which is taken always as a note of mere good feeling; for in their departure they became their expiatory substitutes. At all events, the very pick of our brethren lost their lives in this way, both priests and deacons and some highly praised ones from among the laity, so that this manner of dying does not seem far removed from martyrdom, being the outcome of much piety and stalwart faith. So, too, taking up the bodies of the saints on their arms and breasts, closing their eyes and shutting their mouths, bearing them on their shoulders and laying them out for burial, clinging to them, embracing them, washing them, decking them out, they not long after had the same services rendered to them; for many of the survivors followed in their train. But the Gentiles behaved quite differently: those who were beginning to fall sick they thrust away, and their dearest they fled from, or cast them half dead into the roads: unburied bodies they treated as vile refuse; for they tried to avoid the spreading and communication of the fatal disease, difficult as it was to escape for all their scheming.

TO HIERAX AN EGYPTIAN BISHOP (EUS., H. E. VII. 21) (PART OF
ANOTHER EASTER LETTER)

¹ But what is there surprising in its being difficult for me to correspond even by letter with those who are sojourning at a distance, seeing that it has proved impossible to talk even with myself and to take counsel with my own soul? At all events, with my own kith and kin, with the brethren of my own house and life, citizens of the same Church, I have to communicate by letters and to get them through seems impracticable. For it were easier for one to pass, I say not across the frontier, but even from East to West, than to visit one part of Alexandria from another. For that vast, pathless desert which it took Israel two generations to traverse is not so impassable and hard to cross

as the central street of the city, nor is the sea, which they had for a carriage-road when the waters were parted asunder to make a passage through. And our still and waveless harbours have become an image of those in the passing of which the Egyptians were overwhelmed; for they have often appeared like the Red Sea from the blood which was in them. And the river which flows past the city at one time appeared drier than the waterless desert and more parched than that which Israel crossed over when they were so thirsty that Moses cried out and drink flowed out of the steep rock from Him that worketh wonders:

² and at another time it was so full as to overflow the whole neighbourhood, both roads and fields, and to threaten a return of the flood which occurred in the days of Noah. But in either case it runs polluted with blood and slaughter and drowned corpses, as under Moses it happened to Pharaoh, when the river turned to blood and stank. And what other water could cleanse all this but the water which itself cleanseth all things? How could the mighty ocean which man cannot cross, overspread and sweep away this horrid flood? or how could the great river that goeth out of Eden wash off the stain, though it were to divert the four heads into which it is divided into the single head of the Gihon? or when would the air, reeking everywhere with the evil exhalation, become pure? For such mist from the ground and breezes from the sea, airs from the rivers and vapours from the harbours are given off that for dew we have the impure fluids of corpses rotting in all their component elements.

³ After all this do men wonder, are they at a loss, whence come the continual pestilences, whence the dire diseases, whence the divers ravages, whence the wholesale destruction of life, why the largest city no longer contains in it its former multitude of inhabitants, from infant children to the most advanced in years, whom it used to nourish in other days to a green old age, as the saying went, whereas these from forty up to seventy years of age were so much more numerous then that their number is not now reached even when all from fourteen to eighty are enrolled and put together for the public distribution of food, and thus those whose looks show them to be quite young have become as it were of equal age with those who have long been advanced in years. And though they see the race of man on earth thus dwindling ever and being exhausted, they do not tremble, as its total extinction proceeds and draws near.

(FROM ANOTHER EASTER LETTER)

[This fragment is given in the *Sacra Parallela Rupefucald.*, fol. 70 and 71, where it is ascribed to Dionysius's "Fourth Easter Letter." It is by no means clear which Letter is meant, but the main thought (of the cunning devices by which Love wins its way) is quaintly beautiful and well worthy of our author] Love leaps out in utmost eagerness to confer some benefit even on an unwilling object: yea, often on one who shrinks in shame and tries to shun kind treatment from dislike of being burdensome to another, and would fain put up with his annoyances alone, in order not to cause trouble and inconvenience to any. He that is full of Love craves leave to suffer and endure: to be in evil case, he thinks, gives opportunity for being helped, and he will do the greatest favour to another, not himself, if through that other the evil, which is his own, is made to cease.

TO BASILIDES, BISHOP OF THE CHURCHES IN THE PENTAPOLIS
(CYRENAICA)

¹[This canonical Letter was accepted at the third Council of Constantinople in Trullo (A.D. 680)] Dionysius to Basilides my beloved son and brother and godly fellow-worker, greeting in the Lord. ²(1) You sent to me, my most faithful and learned son, to inquire at what hour one ought to end the fast before Easter. For you say that some of the brethren maintain one should do so at cockcrow: and some at evening. For the brethren in Rome, so they say, await the cockcrow: but concerning those in the Pentapolis you said they broke the fast sooner. And you ask me to set an exact limit and a definite hour, which is both difficult and risky. For it will be acknowledged by all alike that one ought to start the feast and the gladness after the time of our Lord's resurrection, up till then humbling our souls with fastings. But by what you have written to me, you have quite soundly and with a good insight into the Divine Gospels established the fact that nothing definite appears in them about the hour at which He rose. For the Evangelists described those that came to the tomb diversely—that is, at different times, and all said that they have found the Lord already risen: it was "late on the Sabbath day," as S. Matthew puts it: and "early while it was yet dark," as S. John writes; and "at early dawn," as S. Luke; and "very early ... when the sun was risen," as S. Mark. And when He rose, no one has clearly stated;

³but that "late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," about sunrise on that day those who arrived at the tomb

found Him no longer lying in it, that is agreed to. And we must not imagine that the evangelists are at variance and contradict one another: but even if there seem to be some small dispute upon the matter of your inquiry—that is, if though all agree that the Light of the world our Lord arose on that night, they differ about the hour, yet let us be anxious fairly and faithfully to harmonize what is said. ⁴ What is said, then, by Matthew runs thus: “Late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. As to this word which he uses for “late,” some will think, in accordance with its common acceptation, that the evening of the Sabbath is signified; but others, understanding it more scientifically, will say it is not that, but “the dead of night,” the word used signifying an advanced stage of lateness. And because he means night and not evening, he adds “as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week” and (the women) had not yet come, as the rest say, “bringing spices” but “to see the sepulchre. And they found the earthquake had occurred and the angel seated on the stone, and heard from him the words: “He is not here: he is risen. Similarly, John says:

⁵ “On the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. However, by this account, “when it was still dark” although towards dawn, He had gone forth from the tomb. But Luke says: “On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week at early dawn (the women) came unto the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. “Early dawn” indicates, perchance, the morning light appearing before (the sun itself) on “the first day of the week. In consequence, it was when the Sabbath had now completely passed, with the night that followed, and when a new day was beginning that they came bringing the spices and ointments, by which time it is clear that He had risen long before. To this, also, corresponds what Mark says: “(The women) brought spices that they might come

and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they come to the tomb, when the sun was risen. For he, too, says “very early,” which is the same thing as “at early dawn”: and he has added, “when the sun was risen. For their start and their journey began, it is clear, “at early dawn” and “very early”: but they had gone on spending time both on the road and around the tomb until sunrise.

6 And on this occasion also the white robed young man says to these women: “He is risen: he is not here.” 7 As things stand thus, we pronounce this decision for those who inquire to a nicety at what hour or what half-hour, or quarter of an hour, they should begin their rejoicing at the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead: those who are premature and relax before midnight, though near it, we censure as remiss and wanting in self-restraint; for they drop out of the race just before the end, as the wise man says: “that which is within a little in life is not little.” And those who put off and endure to the furthest and persevere till the fourth watch, when our Saviour appeared to those who were sailing also, walking on the sea, we shall approve as generous and painstaking. And those midway who stop as they were moved or as they were able, let us not treat altogether severely. For all do not continue during the six days of the fast either equally or similarly: but some remain without food till cockcrow on all the days, some on two, or three, or four, and some on none of them. And for those who strictly persist in these prolonged fasts and then are distressed and almost faint, there is pardon if they take something sooner. But if some, so far from prolonging their fast do not fast at all, but feed luxuriously during the earlier days of the week, and then, when they come to the last two and prolong their fast on them alone, viz. on Friday and Saturday, think they are performing some great feat by continuing till dawn, I do not hold that they have exercised an equal discipline with those who have practised it for longer periods. I give you this counsel in accordance with my judgment in writing on these points.

8 [Three rulings follow on points which it is not necessary to set out here]
(2) These answers I give you from respect for you, beloved, not because you were ignorant of the subjects of your inquiry but to render us of one mind and soul with yourself, as indeed we are. And I have set forth my opinion for you to share not as a teacher but as it becomes us to discuss one with another in all simplicity: and when you have considered it again, my most sagacious son, you should write again and tell me whatever seems to you better or what

you judge to be as I have said. I pray that you may prosper, my beloved son, as you minister to the Lord in peace.

“ON THE PROMISES” (EUS., H. E. VII. 24 AND 25)

¹(1) Seeing that they bring forward a composition of Nepos, on which they rely too much as showing irrefutably that the Kingdom of Christ will be on earth, though I accept and love Nepos for many other things, his faith, his laboriousness, his study of the Scriptures, and the many psalms he has written, by which already many of the brethren are encouraged, and though I hold him in all the greater respect because he has gone to his rest before us, yet the truth is so dear to me and to be preferred that I can indeed applaud and give my full assent to right propositions, but must examine and correct whatever appears to be unsoundly stated. And if he were still with us and propounding his views merely by word of mouth, a discussion without writing would have sufficed to persuade and convince our opponents by way of question and answer. But now that this writing of his is published, which many think most convincing, and certain teachers hold the law and the prophets of no account and have relinquished the following of the Gospels and depreciated the Epistles of the Apostles, while they parade the teaching of this book as if it were some great and hidden mystery and will not allow our simpler brethren to hold any high and noble opinion either about the glorious and truly Divine appearing of our Lord or about our rising from the dead and our gathering together and being made like unto Him, but persuade them to hope for mean and passing enjoyments like the present in the Kingdom of God, it is necessary that we also should discuss the matter with our brother Nepos as if he were still alive.

²Further on he adds— (2) So being in the district of Arsenoe, where, as you know, this teaching prevailed long before, so that both schisms and the defection of whole churches have occurred, I called together the presbyters and teachers among the brethren in the villages, such of the brethren as wished being also present, and invited them publicly to make an examination of the matter. And when some brought forward against me this book as an impregnable weapon and bulwark, I sat with them three days in succession from dawn till evening and tried to correct the statements made. During which time I was much struck with the steadiness, the desire for truth, the aptness in following an argument and the intelligence displayed by the brethren, whilst we put our questions and difficulties and points of agree-

ment in an orderly and reasonable manner, avoiding the mistake of holding jealously at any cost to what we had once thought, even though it should now be shown to be wrong, and yet not suppressing what we had to say on the other side, but, as far as possible, attempting to grapple with and master the propositions in hand without being ashamed to change one's opinion and yield assent if the argument convinced us; conscientiously and unfeignedly, with hearts spread open before God, accepting what was established by the exposition and teaching of the holy Scriptures.

3 At last the champion and mouthpiece of this doctrine, the man called Coracion, in the hearing of all the brethren that were present agreed and testified to us that he would no longer adhere to it nor discourse upon it nor yet mention nor teach it, on the ground that he had been convinced by what had been said against it. And of the rest of the brethren some rejoiced at the conference and the reconciliation and harmonious arrangement which was brought about by it between all parties. Further on he says this about the Revelation of John— 4(3) Certain people therefore before now discredited and altogether repudiated the book, both examining it chapter by chapter and declaring it unintelligible and inconclusive and that it makes a false statement in its title. For they say it is not John's, no nor yet a "Revelation," because of the heavy, thick veil of obscurity which covers it: and not only is the author of this book not one of the Apostles but he is not even one of the saints nor a churchman at all; it is Cerinthus, the founder of the heresy that was called Cerinthian from him, and he desired to attribute his own composition to a name that would carry weight. For the substance of his teaching was this, that Christ's Kingdom will be on earth, and he dreams that it will be concerned with things after which he himself, being fond of bodily pleasures and very sensual, hankered, such as the satisfying of his belly and lower lusts, that is eating and drinking and marrying and such means as he thought would provide him more decorously with these pleasures, feasts and sacrifices and the slaying of victims. I should not myself venture to reject the book, seeing that many brethren hold it in high esteem, but, reckoning the decision about it to be beyond my powers of mind, I consider the interpreting of its various contents to be recondite and matter for much wonder. For without fully understanding, I yet surmise that some deeper meaning underlies the words, not measuring and judging them by calculations of my own; but giving the preference to faith, I have come to the conclusion that they

are too high for me to comprehend, and so I do not reject what I have not taken in, but can only wonder at these visions which I have not even seen (much less understood).

5 Besides this, after examining the book as a whole and showing that it is impossible to understand it in its literal sense, he proceeds— (4) So having completed practically the whole prophecy, the prophet pronounces a blessing on those who keep it and indeed on himself also: for “blessed,” saith he, “is he that observeth the words of the prophecy of this book and I John who saw and heard these things.” That he was called John, therefore, and that the writing is John’s I will not dispute. For I agree that it is the work of some holy and inspired person but I should not readily assent to his being the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, whose is the Gospel entitled “According to John” and the General Epistle. For I conclude that he is not the same (1) from the character of each, (2) from the style of the language and (3) from what may be called the arrangement of the book. For the Evangelist nowhere inserts his name nor yet proclaims himself either in the Gospel or in the Epistle....

6(5) But John nowhere speaks either in the first or in the third person about himself, whereas he that wrote the Revelation straightway at the beginning puts himself forward: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he gave him to show to his servants speedily, and he sent and signified (it) by his angel to his servant John who bare witness of the word of God and of his testimony, even of all things that he saw.” Then he also writes an Epistle: “John to the seven churches that are in Asia, grace to you and peace.” Whereas the Evangelist did not put his name even at the head of the Catholic Epistle but began with the mystery of the Divine revelation without any superfluous words: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.” 7 For it is over this revelation that the Lord also pronounced Peter blessed, saying: “Blessed art thou Simon bar Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal it to thee, but my heavenly Father. Nay, even in the second and third extant Epistles of John, short though they are, John does not appear by name but he writes himself “the elder” anonymously. Whereas our author did not even consider it sufficient to mention himself by name once and then proceed with his subject, but he repeats the name again, “I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and in the patience of Jesus, was in the isle that is called

Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. In fact, at the end also he says this: "Blessed is he that observeth the words of the prophecy of this book and I John who saw and heard these things. That he which wrote these things, therefore, is John, we must believe as he says so: but which John is not clear. For he does not say, as in many places in the Gospel, that he is the disciple beloved of the Lord, nor the one that reclined on His breast, nor yet the brother of James, nor yet the one that was the eyewitness and hearer of the Lord. Surely he would have used one of the aforesaid descriptions, when desirous of clearly identifying himself.

8 And yet he does nothing of the kind, but calls himself our brother and partaker with us, and witness of Jesus and blessed for the seeing and hearing of the revelations. I suppose that many bore the same name as John the Apostle, who by reason of their love towards him and from their admiration and emulation of him and desire to be loved by the Lord like him, were glad to bear the same name with him, even as many a one among the children of the faithful is called Paul or Peter. There is then another John also in the Acts of the Apostles, the one called Mark whom Barnabas and Paul took with them and of whom it says again: "And they had John as their attendant. But as to whether he is the writer, I should say no. For it is not written that he arrived in Asia with them, but "Paul and his company," it says, "set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. And I think there was yet another among those who were in Asia, since they say there were two tombs in Ephesus and each of them are said to be the tomb of John.

9 Again, from the thoughts and from the actual words and their arrangement this John may be reasonably reckoned different from the other. For the Gospel and the Epistle agree with each other and begin in a similar way. The one says "In the beginning was the Word: and the other "That which was from the beginning. The one says "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled in us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father: the other uses the same or almost equivalent expressions, "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life, and the Life was manifested. For he starts in this way because he is dealing, as he shows in what follows, with those who say that the Lord has not come in the flesh. For which reason he is careful to add also: "And we have seen and bear wit-

ness and announce unto you the eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard we announce also unto you. He is consistent with himself and does not diverge from his own propositions, but treats them throughout under the same heads and in the same terms, of which we will briefly recall;

¹⁰ for instance, the attentive reader will find in each book frequent mention of the Life, the Light, the turning from darkness, constant reference to the Truth, Grace, Joy, the Flesh and the Blood of the Lord, the Judgment, the Forgiveness of sins, the Love of God towards us, the command to us to love one another and that we must keep all the commandments: again there is the conviction of the world, of the devil, of the antichrist, God's adoption of us as Sons, the Faith, which is everywhere required of us, the Father and the Son everywhere: and generally throughout in describing the character of the Gospel and the Epistle one and the same complexion is to be observed in both. But the Revelation is quite different from them, foreign, out of touch and affinity with them, not having, one might almost say, one syllable in common. The Epistle contains no reminiscence nor subject dealt with in the Revelation nor the Revelation in the Epistle (to say nothing of the Gospel), whereas Paul in his Epistles did give some indication even about those revelations which he has not actually described.

¹¹ And yet once more one can estimate the difference between the Gospel and Epistle and the Revelation from the literary style. For the first two books are not only written in irreproachable Greek, but are also most elegant in their phrases, reasonings and arrangements of expression. No trace can be found in them of barbarous words, faulty construction or peculiarities in general. For St. John seems to have possessed both words, the Lord having graciously vouchsafed them to him; viz. both the word and knowledge of the word of speech. That this John had seen a Revelation and received knowledge and the gift of prophecy, I do not deny, but I observe his dialect and inaccurate Greek style, which employs barbaric idioms and sometimes even faulty constructions, which it is not now necessary to expose. For I have not mentioned this in order to scoff, let no one think so, but simply to point out the dissimilarity of the writings.

“ON NATURE” (EUS., PR P. EVANG. XIV. 23-7)

¹(1) How shall we bear with them when they say that the wise and, for that reason, the good productions of Creation are the results of chance coincid-

ences? Each of which as it came into being by itself appeared to Him that ordered it to be good and all of them together equally so. ²For God “saw,” it says, “all things that he had made, and behold they were very good.” And yet they take no warning from the small, ordinary instances at their feet, from which they may learn that no necessary and profitable work is produced without design or haphazard, but is adapted to its proper purpose by handiwork, whereas when it falls into a useless and unprofitable state, it then breaks up and comes to pieces indefinite, and, as it chances, because the wisdom which was concerned in its construction no longer superintends and directs it. For a garment is not woven by the woof standing up without a weaver, nor yet by the warp weaving itself of its own accord: but when it is becoming worn out, the torn rags fall asunder. And a house or a city is built not by receiving certain stones which volunteer for the foundations and others which jump into the courses of the walls, but because the builder brings the stones that fit in the proper order: but when the building is thrown down, each stone falls to the ground just as it may. So, too, when a ship is being built, the keel does not set itself below, while the mast raises itself in the middle and each of the other timbers takes the place which it chances to of itself. Nor, again, do the planks of a wagon—said to be 100 in number—become fixed in the position which each found empty; but the builder in each case puts the timber together suitably. But if the ship, when it went upon the sea, or the wagon, when it was driven along on land, comes to pieces, the timbers are scattered wherever it may happen—in the one case by the waves, in the other by the violent rush.

³In the same way it would befit them to say that the atoms also which are inoperative when they are at rest and not worked by hands, are also useless when they move at random. For let these opponents of ours look to these viewless atoms of theirs and apply their minds to these mindless ones, not like the Psalmist who confesses that this was revealed to him by God alone: “Mine eyes beheld thy unfinished work.” So, too, when they say that those fine webs which they speak of as being produced from atoms, are self-wrought by them without skill or sensation, who can bear to hear of these weaver atoms whom even the spider excels in skill when he spins his web out of himself. ⁴(2) Who, then, is it that discriminates between the atoms, gathering or scattering them, and arranging some in this way to make the sun and others in that way for the moon, and putting each of them together

according to the light-giving power of each star? For the particular number and kind that made the sun by being united in a particular way would never have condescended to produce the moon, nor would the intertwinings of the moon atoms have ever become the sun. Moreover, even Arcturus, bright as he is, would never plume himself on having the atoms of Lucifer, nor the Pleiads those of Orion. For Paul has well distinguished when he says: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for star differeth from star in glory." And if the combination of the atoms, as being soulless, was unintelligent, they needed an intelligent artist to put them together: and if their junction was without purpose and the result of necessity, they being void of reason, some wise herdsman drove them together and presided over them: and if they have been linked together voluntarily to do willing service, some wonderful master-craftsman assigned them their parts and took the lead; or, like an expert general, he did not leave his army disordered and all in a muddle, but disposed the cavalry in one part and the heavy armed troops apart, and the javelin men by themselves and the slingers where they ought to be, in order that those who carried the same weapon might help one another. And if they think this illustration ridiculous because in it I make a comparison of great bodies with small, we will come down to the very smallest.

⁵[Eusebius's extract breaks off here.] (3) If the atoms have no ruler over them, to speak to them or to choose or to arrange them, but they move, settling themselves of their own accord out of the big rushing tumult and producing a big uproar as they clash together, like coming to like without the Divine intervention of which the poet speaks, and if they run and herd together, recognizing their kinsfolk, truly the republic of the atoms is a marvellous one, friends greeting and embracing one another and hasting to take up their abode in one habitation: some have rounded themselves off spontaneously into the sun, that mighty orb, that they may produce the day, and some perchance have flared up into the many pyramids of stars that they may encircle the whole expanse of sky, while others are ranged around it, in order that they may—albeit undesignedly—form the firmament and arch the atmosphere over for the graduated ascent of the stars, and that the confederation of these helter-skelter atoms may choose their abodes and apportion the sky as homes and stations for themselves.

6(4) So far are these deniers of Divine Providence from comprehending the invisible parts of the universe that they do not even see what is visible. For they appear not even to consider the ordered risings and settings of the sun, conspicuous though they be, let alone those of the other heavenly bodies; nor yet to appreciate the assistance thus given to mankind through them, the day being lighted up for work and the night being darkened for rest. For man shall go forth, it says, to his work and his labour until the evening. But they do not even take note of its other revolution, by which it brings about the fixed times and fair seasons and the regular winter and summer solstices, under guidance of its component atoms. Yet however much these poor creatures dislike it, it is as the righteous believe: Great is the Lord that made him: and at His word he hasteneth his course. Do atoms, ye blind, bring you winter and rains, in order that the earth may produce food for you and all the animals upon it? do they introduce summer that ye may receive for your enjoyment the fruits of the trees also? then why do you not bow down and sacrifice to the atoms that are the guardians of earth's fruits? ungrateful truly ye are, never offering them the smallest firstfruits of the many gifts ye have from them.

7(5) The many-tribed and much-mixed populace of the stars which the much-roving and ever-scattered atoms composed have (they say) apportioned among themselves their places according to agreement, setting up, as it were, a colony or a community, without any founder or controller taking the lead over them: and they observe the duties of neighbourliness to one another by compact and peaceably, not transgressing the original bounds which they accepted, as if they were under the jurisdiction of such atoms as had regal power. But the atoms do not rule; how could they, being of no account? Nay, listen to the Divine announcement (λόγια): "In the judgment of the Lord are his works from the beginning; and from the making of them he disposed the parts thereof. He garnished his works for ever and the beginnings of them unto their generation." 8(6) What well-ordered phalanx ever traversed an earthly plain, no one stepping in front of others, nor falling out of the ranks, nor obstructing his comrades, nor falling behind them, in the way that the stars advance ever in regular order, shield locked in shield—that continuous, unwavering, unencumbered and unembarrassed host? Yet certain obscure deviations (we are told) arise among them through clashings and sideward motions: and that they who devote themselves to their study

can always tell the seasons and foresee the positions at which they will rise. Let, then, these cutters of the uncuttable and dividers of the indivisible and combiners of the uncombined and discerners of the infinite tell us by what means occurs the encompassing journey round the heavens in company? it cannot be because a single combination of atoms has been without purpose hurled as from a sling in this way, seeing that the whole encircling band goes on its regular rhythmic way and whirls around together; by what means those multitudinous fellow-voyagers proceed in company albeit they are without arrangement or purpose and unknown to one another? Well did the prophet include amongst things impossible and undemonstrable that two strangers should run in company: Shall two walk at all together, he says, unless they are acquainted?

⁹(7) (That to work is not toilsome to God.) ¹⁰ To work and to administer and to benefit and to provide and the like are perchance vexatious to the idle and thoughtless and feeble and iniquitous, amongst whom Epicurus enrolled himself, when he conceived such ideas about the gods. But to the earnest and capable and intelligent and sober-minded, such as those who love wisdom (or philosophers) ought to be (and how much more the gods?), they are not only not unpleasing and irksome but rather most delightful and of all things most agreeable; for negligence and delay in doing something useful is a reproach to them, as the poet warns them, when he counsels: "Put not off till the morrow," and further threatens them: "He that procrastinates hath ever to struggle against disasters," while the prophet instructs us still more solemnly when he says that virtuous deeds are truly godlike, but he that despises them is detestable: "for," saith he, "cursed be he that doeth the works of the Lord negligently. Consequently, while those who are untaught in any craft and are imperfect from want of practice and familiarity with the processes do find toil involved in their endeavours, those who make progress in it, and still more those who have reached perfection, are cheered by their easy success in what they aim at, and would rather accomplish and bring to completion the tasks they are accustomed to than have all the good things of mankind.

¹¹ At all events, Democritus himself, so they say, used to maintain that he would rather discover a single reason for a fact than gain the Persian kingdom; and that though he seeks his reasons so vainly and unreasonably, starting as it were from a void beginning and a roving hypothesis and not ob-

serving that fundamental Necessity which is common to the nature of things existent, but considering his conception of senseless and mindless contingencies to be the highest wisdom of setting up Chance as the mistress and queen of things universal and even of things divine, and maintaining that all things occur through her, and yet warning her off from matters of human life and conduct and accusing those who give her precedence there to be devoid of judgment. At all events, at the beginning of the "Precepts," he says: "Men have fashioned the figure of Chance, as a cloke for their own folly: for by nature chance fights against judgement. Thus they (the Epicureans) have said that this very Chance, the great enemy of intelligence, yet has the mastery over it; or, rather, by utterly uprooting and abolishing the one, they set up the other in its place: for they sing not of intelligence as happy, but of chance as the equivalent of intelligence.

¹² So, then, those who superintend works of beneficence pride themselves in measures which advance the interests of their kind, some as rearers of families, some as directors of institutions, some as healers of men's bodies, some as ministers of state, yes, and those who love wisdom (philosophers) and try hard to instruct their fellows, likewise give themselves great airs—unless Epicurus or Democritus will venture to maintain that philosophizing is mere vexation of spirit: but surely there is no pleasure they would prefer to it. For even though they reckon pleasure to be the absolute good, yet they will be ashamed to say that to philosophize (seek wisdom) is not one of the higher forms of pleasure. And as to the gods, about whom the poets among them sing as "givers of good gifts" and these philosophers combine respect with banter,—the gods neither give nor partake of any good things. And in what manner do they find evidence that gods exist? for they do not see them before their eyes doing anything (even as those who admired the sun and the moon and the stars said they were called gods (θεοί) because they run (θέειν) their course); nor do they attribute to them any creative or constructive powers, in order that they make them gods from the word θεῖναι (set, i. e. make): and on that ground the Maker and Creator of all things is truly the only God;

¹³ nor do they put forward their management or jurisdiction or favours towards men, in order that we may be induced to worship them from motives of fear or reverence.

“REFUTATION AND DEFENCE” (EUS., PR P. EVANG. VII. 19)

¹(1) They are not pious, who hand over matter to God as a thing without beginning for His orderly disposition, maintaining that, being subject to treatment and change, it yields to the modifications imposed by God. For they should explain how both the like and the unlike belong both to God and to matter. For some one must be imagined superior to either, and that may not be entertained about God. For whence came it that there is in them both the being without beginning, which is what is said to be “like” in both and which is also conceived of as different from both? For if God is of Himself without beginning and the being without beginning is, as some would say, His very essence, matter will not be without beginning, too: for matter and God are not identical. But, if each is what it is independently, and to both belongs in addition the property of being without beginning, it is clear that the being without beginning is different from either and older and higher than both. And thus the difference between their opposing states is entirely subversive of their co-existence, or rather of the one, viz. matter existing of itself. Otherwise let them state the reason why, both being without beginning, God is not subject to treatment, unchangeable, immovable, productive, and matter is the opposite, subject to treatment, changeable, mobile, varying.

²Again, how is it that God and matter came in contact and combined? Was it that God adapted Himself to match the nature of matter and exercised His craft upon it? Nay, that is absurd that God, like men, should work in gold and stone and busy Himself in the other handicrafts which the various materials can give shape and form to. But if God endowed matter with the qualities which He in His own wisdom determined, impressing on it as with a seal the multiform and diverse shape and fashion of His own workmanship, this account of it is both proper and true, and yet further proves that God, who is the fundamental principle on which the universe exists, is without beginning. For to its being (according to them) without beginning God add its bearing certain qualities. So, then, there is still much to be said in answer to these views, but we do not propose to say it now. Nevertheless they are expressed with more propriety than those who are absolutely atheistical polytheists.

³(2) (Athan., de sent. Dion., 18). However, when I spoke of certain things that had an origin (γενητά) and certain things that were made (ποιητά), I did

indeed casually mention examples of such things, recognizing that they were not altogether useful for my purpose: for instance, I said that neither was the plant the same as the husbandman, nor the boat as the shipwright. But afterwards I dwelt at length on those which were more to the point and cognate to the subject, and went more into detail about these truer examples, seeking out various additional evidences which I set out for you also in another letter: and in them I refuted as false the accusation also which they bring against me, as not stating that Christ is of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father. For even if I say that this word is not found nor read anywhere in Holy Writ, yet these later attempts of mine to explain which they have ignored are not inconsistent with this conception. For I compared human generation, which is clearly a transmission of the parents' own nature (ὁμογενής), saying that the parents were different from their children in this single point, that they were not themselves the children: or else it must needs be that neither parents nor children should exist. The letter itself I cannot, as I have said before, owing to circumstances, lay my hand on: otherwise I would have sent you my exact words, or rather a copy of the whole letter:

4 and I will do so, if I have the opportunity. But I know from memory that I added several illustrations from things kindred to one another: for instance, I said that a plant coming up from a seed or a root was different from that whence it sprang and yet was absolutely of one nature (ὁμοφύες) with it: and a river flowing from a source partakes of a different shape and name; for neither is the source called river nor the river source, and both these things exist, and the source is, in a sense, the father and the river is the water from the source. But these and similar remarks they pretend never to have seen written, but act as if they were blind. They only try to pelt me from afar with those poor ill-fitting phrases of mine as with stones, failing to recognize that where a subject is obscure and requires to be brought within our understanding, not only do diverse but even quite contradictory illustrations convey the meaning sought for.

5(3) (Ibid., 17.) It has been already said that God is the Fountain of all good things: and the Son is described as the stream flowing forth from Him. For the Word is "the effluence" of mind, and, to use human phraseology, is conveyed from the heart through the mouth, i. e. the mind that finds expression by means of the tongue, being differentiated from the word in the heart. For the one having sent it forth remains and is still what it was; but

the other being sent forth issues and is carried in all directions: and thus each is in each, being different one from the other: and they are one, being two. And it was in this way that the Father and the Son also were said to be one and in one another. Each of the titles employed by me is indivisible and inseparable from its neighbour. I spoke of the Father, and before introducing the Son I implied Him, too, in the Father. I introduced the Son: even if I had not already mentioned the Father He would, of course, have been presupposed in the Son. I added the Holy Spirit: but at the same time I intimated both from Whom and through Whom He came. But they are not aware that the Father is not separated from the Son qua Father—for the title (Father) is suggestive of such connexion (as Son with Father)—nor is the Son cut off from the Father; for the appellation “Father” denotes their common bond. And the Spirit is the object of their dealings, being incapable of desertion by either Him that sends, or Him that conveys. How then can I, who use these titles, hold that They are wholly divided and separated?

6(4) (Ibid., 23). For, as our mind overflows with speech of itself, as says the prophet: “My heart overfloweth with good speech,” and each is diverse from the other, each occupying its proper place distinct from the other, the one dwelling and moving in the heart and the other on the tongue and in the mouth, and yet they are not entirely unconnected nor deprived of one another; the mind is not speechless, nor the speech mindless, but the mind produces the speech, revealing itself thereby; and the speech shows the mind, having been gendered therein; the mind is, as it were, the inlying speech and the speech is the issuing mind; the mind is transferred into the speech and the speech displays the mind to the hearers; and thus the mind through the speech gains a lodgment in the souls of those that hear, entering together with the speech, and the mind is, as it were, the father of the speech, having an independent existence withal; and the speech is, as it were, the son of the mind, being an impossibility prior to the mind, yet brought into association with it from any outside source, but springing from the mind; even so the Father, who is the Almighty and Universal Mind, has the Son, the Word as the Interpreter and Messenger of Himself.

Commentary on the Beginning of Ecclesiastes

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. AD 264

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Alexandria.

CHAPTER I.

¹ Ver. I. "The words of the son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem." In like manner also Matthew calls the Lord the son of David. 3. "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" For what man is there who, although he may have become rich by toiling after the objects of this earth, has been able to make himself three cubits in stature, if he is naturally only of two cubits in stature? Or who, if blind, has by these means recovered his sight? Therefore we ought to direct our toils to a goal beyond the sun: for thither, too, do the exertions of the virtues reach. 4. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever" (unto the age). Yes, unto the age, but not unto the ages. 16. "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

² 17. I knew parables and science: that this indeed is also the spirit's choice. 18. For in multitude of wisdom is multitude of knowledge: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth grief." I was vainly puffed up, and increased wisdom; not the wisdom which God has given, but that wisdom of which Paul says, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." For in this Solomon had also an experience surpassing prudence, and above the measure of all the ancients. Consequently he shows the vanity of it, as what follows in like manner demonstrates: "And my heart uttered many things: I knew wisdom, and knowledge, and parables, and sciences." But this was not the genuine wisdom or knowledge, but that which, as Paul says, puffeth up.

He spake, moreover, as it is written, three thousand parables. But these were not parables of a spiritual kind, but only such as fit the common polity of men; as, for instance, utterances about animals or medicines. For which reason he has added in a tone of raillery, "I knew that this also is the spirit's choice." He speaks also of the multitude of knowledge, not the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, but that which the prince of this world works, and which he conveys to men in order to overreach their souls, with officious questions as to the measures of heaven, the position of earth, the bounds of the sea. But he says also, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." For they search even into things deeper than these, -inquiring, for example, what necessity there is for fire to go upward, and for water to go downward; and when they have learned that it is because the one is light and the other heavy, they do but increase sorrow: for the question still remains, Why might it not be the very reverse?

CHAPTER II.

Ver. I. "I said in mine heart, Go to now, make trial as in mirth, and behold in good. And this, too, is vanity." For it was for the sake of trial, and in accordance with what comes by the loftier and the severe life, that he entered into pleasure, And he makes mention of the mirth, which men call so. And he says, "in good," referring to what men call good things, which are not capable of giving life to their possessor. and which make the man who engages in them vain like themselves. 2. "I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doest thou?" Laughter has a twofold madness; because madness begets laughter, and does not allow the sorrowing for sins; and also because a man of that sort is possessed with madness, in the confusing of seasons, and places, and persons. For he flees from those who sorrow. "And to mirth, What doest thou?" Why dost thou repair to those who are not at liberty to be merry? Why to the drunken, and the avaricious, and the rapacious? And why this phrase, "as wine?" Because wine makes the heart merry; and it acts upon the poor in spirit. The flesh, however, also makes the heart merry, when it acts in a regular and moderate fashion.

3. "And my heart directed me in wisdom, and to overcome in mirth, until I should know what is that good thing to the sons of men which they shall do under the sun for the number of the days of their life." Being directed, he says, by wisdom, I overcame pleasures in mirth. Moreover, for me the aim of knowledge was to occupy myself with nothing vain, but to find the good; for

if a person finds that, he does not miss the discernment also of the profitable. The sufficient is also the opportune, and is commensurate with the length of life. 4. "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards. 5. I made me gardens and orchards. 6. I made me pools of water, that by these I might rear woods producing trees. 7. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had large possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me.

8. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces. I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as cups and the cupbearer. 9. And I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. 10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any pleasure." You see how he reckons up a multitude of houses and fields, and the other things which he mentions, and then finds nothing profitable in them. For neither was he any better in soul by reason of these things, nor by their means did he gain friendship with God. Necessarily he is led to speak also of the true riches and the abiding property. Being minded, therefore, to show what kinds of possessions remain with the possessor, and continue steadily and maintain themselves for him, he adds: "Also my wisdom remained with me. For this alone remains, and all these other things, which he has already reckoned up, flee away and depart. Wisdom, therefore, remained with me, and I remained in virtue of it. For those other things fall, and also cause the fall of the very persons who run after them. But, with the intention of instituting a comparison between wisdom and those things which are held to be good among men, he adds these words, "And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them," and so forth; whereby he describes as evil, not only those toils which they endure who toil in gratifying themselves with pleasures, but those, too, which by necessity and constraint men have to sustain for their maintenance day by day, labouring at their different occupations in the sweat of their faces. For the labour, he says, is great; but the art by the labour is temporary, adding nothing serviceable among things that please. Wherefore there is no profit.

For where there is no excellence there is no profit. With reason, therefore, are the objects of such solicitude but vanity, and the spirit's choice. Now this name of "spirit" he gives to the "soul. For choice is a quality, not a motion. And David says: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit. And in good truth "did

my wisdom remain with me," for it made me know and understand, so as to enable me to speak of all that is not advantageous under the sun. If, therefore, we desire the righteously profitable, if we seek the truly advantageous, if in is our aim to be incorruptible, let us engage those labours which reach beyond the sun. For in these there is no vanity, and there is not the choice of a spirit at once inane and hurried hither and thither to no purpose. 12. "And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what man is there that shall come after counsel in all those things which it has done?" He means the wisdom which comes from God, and which also remained with him. And by madness and folly he designates all the labours of men, and the vain and silly pleasure they have in them. Distinguishing these, therefore, and their measure, and blessing the true wisdom, he has added: "For what man is there that shall come after counsel?" For this counsel instructs us in the wisdom that is such indeed, and gifts us with deliverance from madness and folly. 13. "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light excelleth darkness." He does not say this in the way of comparison. For things which are contrary to each other, and mutually destructive, cannot be compared. But his decision was, that the one is to be chosen, and the other avoided. To like effect is the saying, "Men loved darkness rather than light." For the term "rather" in that passage expresses the choice of the person loving, and not the comparison of the objects themselves.

14. "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness." That man always inclines earthward, he means, and has the ruling faculty darkened. It is true, indeed, that we men have all of us our eyes in our head, if we speak of the mere disposition of the body. But he speaks here of the eyes of the mind. For as the eyes of the swine do not turn naturally up towards heaven, just because it is made by nature to have an inclination toward the belly; so the mind of the man who has once been enervated by pleasures is not easily diverted from the tendency thus assumed, because he has not "respect unto all the commandments of the Lord. Again: Christ is the head of the Church." And they, therefore, are the wise who walk in His way; for He Himself has said, "I am the way." On this account, then, it becomes the wise man always to keep the eyes of his mind directed toward Christ Himself, in order that he may do nothing out of measure, neither being lifted up in heart in the time of prosperity, nor becoming negligent in the day of ad-

versity: "for His judgments are a great deep," as you will learn more exactly from what is to follow.

14. "And I perceived myself also that one event happeneth to them all. 15. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise?" The run of the discourse in what follows deals with those who are of a mean spirit as regards this present life, and in whose judgment the article of death and all the anomalous pains of the body are a kind of dreaded evil, and who on this account hold that there is no profit in a life of virtue, because there is no difference made in ills like these between the wise man and the fool. He speaks consequently of these as the words of a madness inclining to utter senselessness; whence he also adds this sentence, "For the fool talks over-much;" and by the "fool" here he means himself, and every one who reasons in that way. Accordingly he condemns this absurd way of thinking. And for the same reason he has given utterance to such sentiments in the fears of his heart; and dreading the righteous condemnation of those who are to be heard, he solves the difficulty in its pressure by his own reflections. For this word, "Why was I then wise?" was the word of a man in doubt and difficulty whether what is expended on wisdom is done well or to no purpose; and whether there is no difference between the wise man and the fool in point of advantage, seeing that the former is involved equally with the latter in the same sufferings which happen in this present world. And for this reason he says, "I spoke over-largely in my heart," in thinking that there is no difference between the wise man and the fool.

16. "For there is no remembrance of the wise equally with the fool forever." For the events that happen in this life are all transitory, be they even the painful incidents, of which he says, "As all things now are consigned to oblivion." For after a short space has passed by, all the things that befall men in this life perish in forgetfulness. Yea, the very persons to whom these things have happened are not remembered all in like manner, even although they may have gone through like chances in life. For they are not remembered for these, but only for what they may have evinced of wisdom or folly, virtue or vice. The memories of such are not extinguished (equally) among men in consequence of the changes of lot befalling them. Wherefore he has added this: "And how shall the wise man die along with the fool? The death of sinners, indeed, is evil: yet the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked is extinguished."

22. "For that falls to man in all his labour." In truth, to those who occupy their minds with the distractions of life, life becomes a painful thing, which, as it were, wounds the heart with its goads, that is, with the lustful desires of increase. And sorrowful also is the solicitude connected with covetousness: it does not so much gratify those who are successful in it, as it pains those who are unsuccessful; while the day is spent in laborious anxieties, and the night puts sleep to flight from the eyes, with the cares of making gain. Vain, therefore, is the zeal of the man who looks to these things. 24. "And there is nothing good for a man, but what he eats and drinks, and what will show to his soul good in his labour. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God. 25. For who eats and drinks from his own resources?" That the discourse does not deal now with material meats, he will show by what follows; namely, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting." And so in the present passage he proceeds to add: "And (what) will show to his soul good in its labour." And surely mere material meats and drinks are not the soul's good. For the flesh, when luxuriously nurtured, wars against the soul, and rises in revolt against the spirit. And how should not intemperate eatings and drinkings also be contrary to God? He speaks, therefore, of things mystical. For no one shall partake of the spiritual table, but one who is called by Him, and who has listened to the wisdom which says, "Take and eat."

CHAPTER III.

¹ Ver. 3. "There is a time to kill, and a time to heal." To "kill," in the case of him who perpetrates unpardonable transgression; and to "heal," in the case of him who can show a wound that will bear remedy. 4. "A time to weep, and a time to laugh." A time to weep, when it is the time of suffering; as when the Lord also says, "Verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament." But to laugh, as concerns the resurrection: "For your sorrow," He says, "shall be turned into joy." 4. "A time to mourn, and a time to dance." When one thinks of the death which the transgression of Adam brought on us, it is a time to mourn; but it is a time to hold festal gatherings when we call to mind the resurrection from the dead which we expect through the new Adam.

² 6. "A time to keep, and a time to cast away." A time to keep the Scripture against the unworthy, and a time to put it forth for the worthy. Or, again: Before the incarnation it was a time to keep the letter of the law; but it was a

time to cast it away when the truth came in its flower. 7. "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak." A time to speak, when there are hearers who receive the word; but a time to keep silence, when the hearers pervert the word; as Paul says: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." 10. "I have seen, then, the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. 11. Everything that He hath made is beautiful in its time: and He hath set the whole world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning and to the end."

3 And this is true. For no one is able to comprehend the works of God altogether. Moreover, the world is the work of God. No one, then, can find out as to this world what is its space from the beginning and unto the end, that is to say, the period appointed for it, and the limits before determined unto it; forasmuch as God has set the whole world as a realm of ignorance in our hearts. And thus one says: "Declare to me the shortness of my days." In this manner, and for our profit, the end of this world (age)-that is to say, this present life-is a thing of which we are ignorant.

Newly Discovered Letters to Stephen and Xystus

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. AD 264

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Alexandria.

NEWLY DISCOVERED LETTERS TO THE POPES STEPHEN AND XYSTUS

¹ Dionysius of Alexandria, Newly discovered letters to the Popes Stephen and Xystus, F.C. CONYBEARE, English Historical Review 25 (1910) pp. 111-114
Newly discovered Letters of Dionysius of Alexandria to the Popes Stephen and Xystus. DURING the years 254-258 there was a controversy between the see of Rome on the one hand and the Asiatic and African churches on the other as to the validity of baptisms administered by heretics. Pope Stephen maintained that those who had, in an heretical medium, been baptised either in the name of Jesus Christ alone, or in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ought, after a bishop had laid hands on them, to be admitted to communion; whereas Cyprian of Carthage and Firmilian of Caesarea maintained that heresy on the part of the baptiser rendered baptism null and void. The pope accused his antagonists of rebaptising (*ἀναβαπτίζειν*), thereby to some extent begging the question at issue, and excommunicated them both in Asia and in Africa. In this controversy Dionysius, patriarch of Alexandria, intervened, and wrote, as Eusebius relates in the seventh book of his Ecclesiastical History, one letter to Pope Stephen and as many as three to his successor Xystus (257-8). Eusebius has also preserved to us brief extracts from the one letter to Stephen, and from the first and second to Xystus.

² In the library of Valarshapat in Russian Armenia is preserved a bulky refutation of the Tome of Leo and of the decrees of Chalcedon by Timotheus (called Aelurus), the patriarch of Alexandria. The original was composed by him in exile at Gangra and Cherson about the year 460, and was translated into Armenian some time between the years 506 and 544. This version has

just been edited from an old uncial codex which contains it, No. 1945 in the Catalogue of Karinian, by two of the archimandrites of Etshmiadsin, Dr. Karapet Ter-Mekerttshian and Dr. Erwand Ter-Minassiantz. The method of Timotheus is to adduce the Chalcedonian positions, and to confront them first with extracts from orthodox fathers, especially from the works of his own predecessors in the see of Alexandria ; and, secondly, with passages from writers declared by his antagonists (as he assumes) to be heretical, especially Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Nestorius, Paul of Samosata, and Diodore of Tarsus.

3 Among the former set of extracts we find one long fragment of Dionysius' letter to Stephen, and two from his first and third letters to Xystus, of which the following is a literal translation: I. Of the blessed Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, from the letter to Stephanus, bishop of Rome. 4 For as the wisdom [which is] according to the gentiles, by changing them into holy persons, constitutes them friends of God and prophets ; so, conversely, the wickedness by transmuting into unholy persons, manifests them to be enemies of God and false prophets. What one custom ever included these ? For of a custom there is in any case a single period [as cause], whereas of caprices all kinds of ages [are the causes]. And due causes must always pre-exist before the customs of the gentiles and before human laws. I say human, however, because God, as alone knowing all things before they come into being, can naturally also arrive at them by from the first enacting them as law. Men, however, when they have beforehand discerned something, and when they have first formed ideas of certain events, then and not before lay down laws, or make a beginning of customs. If then it was from the apostles, as we said above, that this custom took its beginning, we must adjust ourselves thereto, whatsoever may have been their reasons and the grounds on which they acted ; to the end that we too may observe the same in accordance with their practice. For as to things which were written afterwards and which are until now still found, they are ignored by us ; and let them be ignored, no matter what they are. How can these comply with the customs of the ancients ? And in a word I have deemed certain disquisitions about these matters superfluous ;

5 and I feel that to pay attention to them is noisy and vain. For as we are told after a first and second admonition to avoid them, so must we admonish and converse about them, and after brief inculcation and talk in common we must desist. On points, however, of prime importance and great

weight we must insist. For if anyone utters any impiety about God, as do those who say he is without mercy; or if anyone introduces the worship of strange gods, such an one the law has commanded to stone. But we with the vigorous words of our faith will stone them unless they approach the mystery of Christ; or [if] anyone alter or destroy [it], or [say] that he was either not God or not man, or that he did not die or rise again, or that he is not coming again to judge the quick and the dead ; or if he preach any other gospel than we have preached, let him be accursed, says Paul. But if anyone despises the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, let such an one be at once ranked with the dead. For these reasons, that we may be in accord, church with church and bishop with bishop and elder with elder, let us be careful in our utterances.

6 Moreover in judging of and dealing with particular cases,—as to how it is proper to admit those who come to us from without, and how to supervise those who are within,—we give instructions to the local primates who under divine imposition of hands were appointed to discharge these duties ; for they shall give a summary account to the Lord of whatsoever they do. 7 [This account perfectly accords with what we know from other sources of this controversy. Pope Stephen, as the tract *De Rebaptismate* alleges, appealed to *vetustissima consuetudo ac traditio ecclesiastica*. Dionysius meets his appeal by asking how could the orthodox and the heretic have in common any custom? *Qualis una istos circumclusit consuetudo?* He argues from Tit. iii. 10 that heretics should be left severely alone, and affirms that he has instructed the duly ordained ecclesiastical authorities of his province to treat those who *ad ecclesiam advolant*—to use the phrase of the *De Rebaptismate*—as if they came wholly from the outside or pagan world, that is to baptise them, and afterwards to watch them carefully.] II. Of the same from the first letter to Xystus, chief bishop of Rome.

8 Inasmuch as you have written thus, setting forth the pious legislation, which we continually read and now have in remembrance—namely that it shall suffice only to lay hands on those who shall have made profession in baptism, whether in pretence or in truth, of God Almighty and of Christ and of the Holy Spirit; but those over whom there has not been invoked the name either of Father or of Son or of the Holy Spirit, these we must baptise, but not rebaptise. This is the sure and immovable teaching and tradition, begun by our Lord after his resurrection from the dead, when he gave his

apostles the command : Go ye, make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This then was preserved and fulfilled by his successors, the blessed apostles, and by all the bishops prior to ourselves who have died in the holy church and shared in its life ; and it has lasted down to us, because it is firmer than the whole world. For, he said, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

9III. Of the same to the same from the third letter. If then our faith urges us to have zeal for God and with our entire heart love him ; and if we must regard as unclean only those who condemn the really one and only God, and Creator and Lord of heaven and earth and of all things, declaring that he is inferior to and less estimable than some other god ; and they attribute wickedness to the all good, or they do not believe that his Beloved is our Saviour Jesus Christ, whatever else he be; but breaking up the marvellous economy and mighty mystery, they believe some of them that he is not God nor Son of God, but others, that he never became man nor came in the flesh, but say that he was a phantasm and shadow—all these John has rightly in his epistle called anti-Christ. Moreover of these the prophet also bore witness, saying: Thy hated ones, O Lord, I have hated, and because of thine enemies I have wasted away. With perfect hatred I have hated them; they are become mine enemies. And these are all they that have among us the appellation of heretics. If however we in the least let them have their way or side with them, then no longer will the precept to love God with our whole heart be observed in its entirety, though that it is which it ever profits us to foster and increase.

10[In this letter Dionysius protests against the least concession being made to the heretics whose errors he enumerates, in the way of recognising their baptisms as valid. F. C. CONYBEARE.] [Footnotes have been moved to the end. Greek text is rendered using the Scholars Press SPIonic font, free from here.]

Shorter Writings of Dionysius

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. AD 264

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Alexandria.

AN EXPOSITION OF LUKE 22. 46, ETC

¹ This prayer He also offered up Himself, falling repeatedly on His face; and on both occasions He urged His request for not entering into temptation: both when He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and when He said, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. For He spoke of not entering into temptation, and He made that His prayer; but He did not ask that He should have no trial whatsoever in these circumstances, or that no manner of hardship should ever befall Him. For in the most general application it holds good, that it does not appear to be possible for any man to remain altogether without experience of ill: for, as one says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness;" and again, "The most of the days of man are labour and trouble," as men themselves also admit. Short is our life, and full of sorrow. Howbeit it was not meet that He should bid them pray directly that that curse might not be fulfilled, which is expressed thus: "Cursed is the ground in thy works: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" or thus, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shall thou return. For which reason the Holy Scriptures, that indicate in many various ways the dire distressfulness of life, designate it as a valley of weeping.

² And most of all indeed is this world a scene of pain to the saints, to whom He addresses this word, and He cannot lie in uttering it: "In the world ye shall have tribulation. And to the same effect also He says by the prophet, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous. But I suppose that He refers to this entering not into temptation, when He speaks in the prophet's words of being delivered out of the afflictions. For He adds, "The Lord will deliver him out of them all. And this is just in accordance with the Saviour's word,

whereby He promises that they will overcome their afflictions, and that they will participate in that victory which He has won for them. For after saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He added, "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And again, He taught them to pray that they might not fall into temptation, when He said, "And lead us not into temptation; "which means, "Suffer us not to fall into temptation. And to show that this did not imply they should not be tempted, but really that they should be delivered from the evil, He added, "But deliver us from evil. But perhaps you will say, What difference is there between being tempted, and falling or entering into temptation?

3 Well, if one is overcome of evil-and he will be overcome unless he struggles against it himself, and unless God protects him with His shield-that man has entered into temptation, and is in it, and is brought under it like one that is led captive. But if one withstands and endures, that man is indeed tempted; but he has not entered into temptation, or fallen under it. Thus Jesus was led up of the Spirit, not indeed to enter into temptation, but "to be tempted of the devil. And Abraham, again, did not enter into temptation, neither did God lead him into temptation, but He tempted (tried) him; yet He did not drive him into temptation. The Lord Himself, moreover, tempted (tried) the disciples. And thus the wicked one, when he tempts us, draws us into the temptations, as dealing himself with the temptations of evil; but God, when He tempts (tries), adduces the temptations as one untempted of evil. For God, it is said, "cannot be tempted of evil. The devil, therefore, drives us on by violence, drawing us to destruction; but God leads us by the hand, training us for our salvation.

OF THE ONE SUBSTANCE

The plant that springs from the root is something distinct from that whence it grows up; and yet it is of one nature with it. And the river which flows from the fountain is something distinct from the fountain. For we cannot call either the river a fountain, or the fountain a river. Nevertheless we allow that they are both one according to nature, and also one in substance; and we admit that the fountain may be conceived of as father, and that the river is what is begotten of the fountain.

ON JOHN 8. 12

Now this word "I am" expresses His eternal subsistence. For if He is the reflection of the eternal light, He must also be eternal Himself. For if the light subsists for ever, it is evident that the reflection also subsists for ever. And that this light subsists, is known only by its shining; neither can there be a light that does not give light. We come back, therefore, to our illustrations. If there is day, there is light; and if there is no such thing, the sun certainly cannot be present. If, therefore, the sun had been eternal, there would also have been endless day. Now, however, as it is not so, the day begins when the sun rises, and it ends when the sun sets. But God is eternal light, having neither beginning nor end. And along with Him there is the reflection, also without beginning, and everlasting. The Father, then, being eternal, the Son is also eternal, being light of light; and if God is the light, Christ is the reflection; and if God is also a Spirit, as it is written, "God is a Spirit," Christ, again, is called analogously Spirit.

ON LUKE 22. 42, ETC

¹ But let these things be enough to say on the subject of the will. This word, however, "Let the cup pass," does not mean, Let it not come near me, or approach me. For what can pass from Him must certainly first come nigh Him, and what does thus pass from Him must be by Him. For if it does not reach Him, it cannot pass from Him. Accordingly, as if He now felt it to be present, He began to be in pain, and to be troubled, and to be sore amazed, and to be in an agony. And as if it was at hand and placed before Him, He does not merely say "the cup," but He indicates it by the word "this. Therefore, as what passes from one is something which neither has no approach nor is permanently settled with one, so the Saviour's first request is that the temptation which has come softly and plainly upon Him, and associated itself lightly with Him, may be turned aside. And this is the first form of that freedom from falling into temptation, which He also counsels the weaker disciples to make the subject of their prayers; that, namely, which concerns the approach of temptation: for it must needs be that offences come, but yet those to whom they come ought not to fall into the temptation.

² But the most perfect mode in which this freedom from entering into temptation is exhibited, is what He expresses in His second request, when He says not merely, "Not as I will," but also, "but as Thou wilt. For with God

there is no temptation in evil; but He wills to give us good exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think. That His will, therefore, is the perfect will, the Beloved Himself knew; and often does He say that He has come to do that will, and not His own will,—that is to say, the will of men. For He takes to Himself the person of men, as having been made man. Wherefore also on this occasion He deprecates the doing of the inferior, which is His own, and begs that the superior should be done, which is His Father's, to wit, the divine will, which again, however, in respect of the divinity, is one and the same will in Himself and in His Father. For it was the Father's will that He should pass through every trial (temptation), and the Father Himself in a marvellous manner brought Him on this course; not indeed, with the trial itself as His goal, nor in order simply that He might enter into that, but in order that He might prove Himself to be above the trial, and also beyond it. And surely it is the fact that the Saviour asks neither what is impossible, nor what is impracticable, nor what is contrary to the will of the Father.

³ It is something possible, for Mark makes mention of His saying, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; "and they are possible if He wills them, for Luke tells us that He said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me. The Holy Spirit therefore, apportioned among the evangelists, makes up the full account of our Saviour's whole disposition by the expressions of these several narrators together. He does not then ask of the Father what the Father wills not. For the words, "if Thou be willing," were demonstrative of subjection and docility, not of ignorance or hesitancy. And just as when we make any request that may be accordant with his judgment, at the hand of father or ruler or any one of those whom we respect, we are accustomed to use the address, though not certainly as if we were in doubt about it, "if you please; "so the Saviour also said, "if Thou be willing: "not that He thought that He willed something different, and thereafter learned the fact, but that He understood exactly God's willingness to remove the cup from Him, and as doing so also apprehended justly that what He wills is also possible unto Him. For this reason the other scripture says, "All things are possible unto Thee. And Matthew again admirably describes the submission and the humility, when he says, "if it be possible.

⁴ For unless we adapt the sense in this way, some will perhaps assign an impious signification to this expression "if it be possible," as if there were anything impossible for God to do, except that only which He does not will

to do. Therefore the request which He made was nothing independent, nor one which pleased Himself only, or opposed His Father's will, but one also in conformity with the mind of God. And yet some one may say that He is overborne and changes His mind, and asks presently something different from what He asked before, and holds no longer by His own will, but introduces His Father's will. Well, such truly is the case. Nevertheless He does not by any means make any change from one side to another; but He embraces another way, and a different method of carrying out one and the same transaction, which is also a thing agreeable to both; choosing, to wit, in place of the mode which is the inferior, and which appears unsatisfying also to Himself, the superior and more, admirable mode marked out by the Father. For no doubt He did pray that the cup might pass from Him; but He says also, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. He longs painfully, on the one hand, for its passing from Him, but (He knows that) it is better as the Father wills. For He does not utter a petition for its not passing away now, instead of one for its removal;

5 but when its withdrawal is now before His view, He chooses rather that this should be ordered as the Father wills. For there is a twofold kind of withdrawal: there is one in the instance of an object that has shown itself and reached another, and is gone at once on being followed by it or on out-running it, as is the case with racers when they graze each other in passing; and there is another in the instance of an object that has sojourned and tarried with another, and sat down by it, as in the case of a marauding band or a camp, and that after a time withdraws on being conquered, and on gaining the opposite of a success. For if they prevail they do not retire, but carry off with them those whom they have reduced; but if they prove unable to win the mastery, they withdraw themselves in disgrace. Now it was after the former similitude that He wished that the cup might come into His hands, and promptly pass from Him again very readily and quickly; but as soon as He spake thus, being at once strengthened in His humanity by the Father's divinity, He urges the safer petition, and desires no longer that should be the case, but that it might be accomplished in accordance with the Father's good pleasure, in glory, in constancy, and in fulness. For John, who has given us the record of the sublimest and divinest of the Saviour's words and deeds, heard Him speak thus:

6 "And the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? "Now, to drink the cup was to discharge the ministry and the whole economy of trial with fortitude, to follow and fulfil the Father's determination, and to surmount all apprehensions; and, indeed, in the very prayer which He uttered He showed that He was leaving these (apprehensions) behind Him. For of two objects, either may be said to be removed from the other: the object that remains may be said to be removed from the one that goes away, and the one that goes away may be said to be removed from the one that remains. Besides, Matthew has indicated most clearly that He did indeed pray that the cup might pass from Him, but yet that His request was that this should take place not as He willed, but as the Father willed it. The words given by Mark and Luke, again, ought to be introduced in their proper connection. For Mark says, "Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt; "and Luke says, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done. He did then express Himself to that effect, and He did desire that His passion might abate and reach its end speedily. But it was the Father's will at the same time that He should carry out His conflict in a manner demanding sustained effort, and in sufficient measure. Accordingly He (the Father) adduced all that assailed Him.

7 But of the missiles that were hurled against Him, some were shivered in pieces, and others were dashed back as with invulnerable arms of steel, or rather as from the stern and immoveable rock. Blows, spittings, scourgings, death, and the lifting up in that death, all came upon Him; and when all these were gone through, He became silent and endured in patience unto the end, as if He suffered nothing, or was already dead. But when His death was being prolonged, and when it was now overmastering Him, if we may so speak, beyond His utmost strength, He cried out to His Father, "Why hast Thou forsaken me? "And this exclamation was in due accordance with the requests He had previously made: Why is it that death has been in such close conjunction with me all along up till now, and Thou dost not yet bear the cup past me? Have I not drank it already, and drained it? But if not, my dread is that I may be utterly consumed by its continuous pressure; and that is what would befall me, wert Thou to forsake me: then would the fulfilment abide, but I would pass away, and be made of none effect. Now, then, I entreat Thee, let my baptism be finished, for indeed I have been straitened greatly until it should be accomplished.-This I judge to have been the Saviour's

meaning in this concise utterance. And He certainly spake truth then. Nevertheless He was not forsaken.

8 Albeit He drank out the cup at once, as His plea had implied, and then passed away. And the vinegar which was handed to Him seems to me to have been a symbolical thing. For the turned wine indicated very well the quick turning and change which He sustained when He passed from His passion to impassibility, and from death to deathlessness, and from the position of one judged to that of one judging, and from subjection under the despot's power to the exercise of kingly dominion. And the sponge, as I think, signified the complete transfusion of the Holy Spirit that was realized in Him. And the reed symbolized the royal sceptre and the divine law. And the hyssop expressed that quickening and saving resurrection of His by which He has also brought health to us. But we have gone through these matters in sufficient detail on Matthew and John. With the permission of God, we shall speak also of the account given by Mark. But at present we shall keep to what follows in our passage.

ON THE RECEPTION OF THE LAPSED TO PENITENCE

But now we are doing the opposite. For whereas Christ, who is the good Shepherd, goes in quest of one who wanders, lost among the mountains, and calls him back when he flees from Him, and is at pains to take him up on His shoulders when He has found him, we, on the contrary, harshly spurn such a one even when He approaches us. Yet let us not consult so miserably for ourselves, and let us not in this way be driving the sword against ourselves. For when people set themselves either to do evil or to do good to others, what they do is certainly not confined to the carrying out of their will on those others; but just as they attach themselves to iniquity or to goodness, they will themselves become possessed either by divine virtues or by unbridled passions. And the former will become the followers and comrades of the good angels; and both in this world and in the other, with the enjoyment of perfect peace and immunity from all ills, they will fulfil the most blessed destinies unto all eternity, and in God's fellowship they will be for ever (in possession of) the supremest good. But these latter will fall away at once from the peace of God and from peace with themselves, and both in this world and after death they will abide with the spirits of blood-guiltiness. Wherefore let us not thrust from us those who seek a penitent return; but let

us receive them gladly, and number them once more with the stedfast, and make up again what is defective in them.

Fragments on the Gospel of Luke

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. AD 264

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Alexandria.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

An Interpretation.-Chap. XXII. 42-48.

Ver. 42. "Father, if Thou be willing to remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." But let these things be enough to say on the subject of the will. This word, however, "Let the cup pass," does not mean, Let it not come near me, or approach me. For what can "pass from Him," certainly must first come nigh Him; and what does pass thus from Him, must be by Him. For if it does not reach Him, it cannot pass from Him. For He takes to Himself the person of man, as having been made man. Wherefore also on this occasion He deprecates the doing of the inferior, which is His own, and begs that the superior should be done, which is His Father's, to wit, the divine will; which again, however, in respect of the divinity, is one and the same will in Himself and in the Father. For it was the Father's will that He should pass through every trial (temptation); and the Father Himself in a marvellous manner brought Him on this course, not indeed with the trial itself as His goal, nor in order simply that He might enter into that, but in order that He might prove Himself to be above the trial, and also beyond it. And surely it is the fact, that the Saviour asks neither what is impossible, nor what is impracticable, nor what is contrary to the will of the Father. It is something possible; for I Mark makes mention of His saying, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee. And they are possible if He wills them;

for Luke tells us that He said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me. The Holy Spirit, therefore, apportioned among the evangelists, makes up the full account of our Saviour's whole disposition by the expres-

sions of these several narrators together. He does not, then, ask of the Father what the Father wills not. For the words, "If Thou be willing," were demonstrative of subjection and docility, not of ignorance or hesitancy. For this reason, the other scripture says, "All things are possible unto Thee. And Matthew again admirably describes the submission and humility when he says, "If it be possible. For unless I adapt the sense in this way, some will perhaps assign an impious signification to this expression, "If it be possible; "as if there were anything impossible for God to do, except that only which He does not will to do. But ... being straightway strengthened in His humanity by His ancestral divinity, he urges the safer petition, and desires no longer that should be the case, but that it might be accomplished in accordance with the Father's good pleasure, in glory, in constancy, and in fulness. For John, who has given us the record of the sublimest and divinest of the Saviour's words and deeds, heard Him speak thus: "And the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? " Now, to drink the cup was to discharge the ministry and the whole economy of trial with fortitude, to follow and fulfil the Father's determination, and to surmount all apprehensions.

And the exclamation, "Why hast Thou forsaken me? "was in due accordance with the requests He had previously made: Why is it that death has been in conjunction with me all along up till now, and that I bear not yet the cup? This I judge to have been the Saviour's meaning in this concise utterance. And He certainly spake truth then. Nevertheless He was not forsaken. But He drank out the cup at once, as His plea had implied, and then passed away. And the vinegar which was handed to Him seems to me to have been a symbolical thing. For the turned wine indicated very well the quick turning and change which He sustained, when He passed from His passion to impassibility, and from death to deathlessness, and from the position of one judged to that of one judging, and from subjection under the despot's power to the exercise of kingly dominion. And the sponge, as I think, signified the complete transfusion of the Holy Spirit that was realized in Him. And the reed symbolized the royal sceptre and the divine law. And the hyssop expressed that quickening and saving resurrection of His, by which He has also brought health to us. 43. "And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

44. And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The phrase, "a

sweat of blood," is a current parabolic expression used of persons in intense pain and distress; as also of one in bitter grief people say that the man "weeps tears of blood." For in using the expression, "as it were great drops of blood," he does not declare the drops of sweat to have been actually drops of blood. For he would not then have said that these drops of sweat were like blood. For such is the force of the expression, "as it were great drops." But rather with the object of making it plain that the Lord's body was not bedewed with any kind of subtle moisture which had only the show and appearance of actuality, but that it was really suffused all over with sweat in the shape of large thick drops, he has taken the great drops of blood as an illustration of what was the case with Him. And accordingly, as by the intensity of the supplication and the severe agony, so also by the dense and excessive sweat, he made the facts patent, that the Saviour was man by nature and in reality, and not in mere semblance and appearance, and that He was subject to all the innocent sensibilities natural to men. Nevertheless the words, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again," show that His passion was a voluntary thing; and besides that, they indicate that the life which is laid down and taken again is one thing, and the divinity which lays that down and takes it again is another.

He says, "one thing and another," not as making a partition into two persons, but as showing the distinction between the two natures. And as, by voluntarily enduring the death in the flesh, He implanted incorruptibility in it; so also, by taking to Himself of His own free-will the passion of our servitude, He set in it the seeds of constancy and courage, whereby He has nerved those who believe on Him for the mighty conflicts belonging to their witness-bearing. Thus, also, those drops of sweat flowed from Him in a marvellous way like great drops of blood, in order that He might, as it were, drain off and empty the fountain of the fear which is proper to our nature. For unless this had been done with a mystical import, He certainly would not, even had He been the most timorous and ignoble of men, have been bedewed in this unnatural way with drops of sweat like drops of blood under the mere force of His agony.

Of like import is also the sentence in the narrative which tells us that an angel stood by the Saviour and strengthened Him. For this, too, bore also on the economy entered into on our behalf. For those who are appointed to engage in the sacred exertions of conflicts on account of piety, have the angels

from heaven to assist them. And the prayer, "Father, remove the cup," He uttered probably not as if He feared the death itself, but with the view of challenging the devil by these words to erect the cross for Him. With words of deceit that personality deluded Adam; with the words of divinity, then, let the deceiver himself now be deluded. Howbeit assuredly the will of the Son is not one thing, and the will of the Father another. For He who wills what the Father wills, is found to have the Father's will. It is in a figure, therefore, that He says, "not my will, but Thine." For it is not that He wishes the cup to be removed, but that He refers to the Father's will the right issue of His passion, and honours thereby the Father as the First. For if the fathers style one's disposition *gnomè*, and if such disposition relates also to what is in consideration hidden as if by settled purpose, how say some that the Lord, who is above all these things, bears a *gnomic* will? Manifestly that can be only by defect of reason.

45. "And when He rose from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow; 46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." For in the most general sense it holds good that it is apparently not possible for any man to remain altogether without experience of ill. For, as one says, the whole world lieth in wickedness; " and again, "The most of the days of man are labour and trouble." But you will perhaps say, What difference is there between being tempted, and falling or entering into temptation? Well, if one is overcome of evil-and he will be overcome unless he struggles against it himself, and unless God protects him with His shield-that man has entered into temptation, and is in it, and is brought under it like one that is led captive. But if one withstands and endures, that man is indeed tempted; but he has not entered into temptation, or fallen into it. Thus Jesus was led up of the Spirit, not indeed to enter into temptation, but to be tempted of the devil. And Abraham, again, did not enter into temptation, neither did God lead him into temptation, but He tempted (tried) him; yet He did not drive him into temptation. The Lord Himself, moreover, tempted (tried) the disciples. Thus the wicked one, when he tempts us, draws us into the temptations, as dealing himself with the temptations of evil. But God, when He tempts (tries), adduces the temptations (trials) as one untempted of evil. For God, it is said, "cannot be tempted of evil." The devil, therefore, drives us on by violence,

drawing us to destruction; but God leads us by hand, training us for our salvation.

47. "And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus, and kissed Him. 48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? How wonderful this endurance of evil by the Lord, who even kissed the traitor, and spake words softer even than the kiss! For He did not say, O thou abominable, yea, utterly abominable traitor, is this the return you make to us for so great kindness? But, somehow, He says simply "Judas," using the proper name, which was the address that would be used by one who commiserated a person, or who wished to call him back, rather than of one in anger. And He did not say, "thy Master, the Lord, thy benefactor;" but He said simply, "the Son of man," that is, the tender and meek one: as if He meant to say, Even supposing that I was not your Master, or Lord, or benefactor, dost thou still betray one so guilelessly and so tenderly affected towards thee, as even to kiss thee in the hour of thy treachery, and that, too, when the kiss was the signal for thy treachery? Blessed art Thou, O Lord! How great is this example of the endurance of evil that Thou hast shown us in Thine own person! how great, too, the pattern of lowliness! Howbeit, the Lord has given us this example, to show us that we ought not to give up offering our good counsel to our brethren, even should nothing remarkable be effected by our words.

For as incurable wounds are wounds which cannot be remedied either by severe applications, or by those which may act more pleasantly upon them; so the soul, when it is once carried captive, and gives itself up to any kind of wickedness, and refuses to consider what is really profitable for it, although a myriad counsels should echo in it, takes no good to itself. But just as if the sense of hearing were dead within it, it receives no benefit from exhortations addressed to it; not because it cannot, but only because it will not. This was what happened in the case of Judas. And yet Christ, although He knew all these things beforehand, did not at any time, from the beginning on to the end, omit to do all in the way of counsel that depended on Him. And inasmuch as we know that such was His practice, we ought also unceasingly to endeavour to set those right who prove careless, even although no actual good may seem to be effected by that counsel.

A Declaration of Faith

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

c. AD 213–270

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Neocaesarea, called the Wonderworker.

A DECLARATION OF FAITH

There is one God, the Father of the living Word, who is His subsistent Wisdom and Power and Eternal Image: perfect Begetter of the perfect Begotten, Father of the only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, Only of the Only, God of God, Image and Likeness of Deity, Efficient Word, Wisdom comprehensive of the constitution of all things, and Power formative of the whole creation, true Son of true Father, Invisible of Invisible, and Incorruptible of Incorruptible, and Immortal of Immortal and Eternal of Eternal. And there is One Holy Spirit, having His subsistence from God, and being made manifest by the Son, to wit to men: Image of the Son, Perfect Image of the Perfect; Life, the Cause of the living; Holy Fount; Sanctity, the Supplier, or Leader, of Sanctification; in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all. There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty, neither divided nor estranged. Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude in the Trinity; nor anything superinduced, as if at some former period it was non-existent, and at some later period it was introduced. And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abideth ever.

A Metaphrase of the Book of Ecclesiastes

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

c. AD 213–270

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Neocaesarea, called the Wonderworker.

CHAPTER I.

¹ These words speaketh Solomon, the son of David the king and prophet, to the whole Church of God, a prince most honoured, and a prophet most wise above all men. How vain and fruitless are the affairs of men, and all pursuits that occupy man! For there is not one who can tell of any profit attaching to those things which men who creep on earth strive by body and soul to attain to, in servitude all the while to what is transient, and undesirous of considering aught heavenly with the noble eye of the soul. And the life of men weareth away, as day by day, and in the periods of hours and years, and the determinate courses of the sun, some are ever coming, and others passing away. And the matter is like the transit of torrents as they fall into the measureless deep of the sea with a mighty noise. And all things that have been constituted by God for the sake of men abide the same: as, for instance, I that man is born of earth, and departs to earth again; that the earth itself continues stable; that the sun accomplishes its circuit about it perfectly, and rolls round to the same mark again; and that the winds in like manner, and the mighty rivers which flow into the sea, and the breezes that beat upon it, all act without forcing it to pass beyond its limits, and without themselves also violating their appointed laws.

² And these things, indeed, as bearing upon the good of this life of ours, are established thus fittingly. But those things which are of men's devising, whether words or deeds, have no measure. And there is a plenteous multitude of words, but there is no profit from random and foolish talking. But the race of men is naturally insatiate in its thirst both for speaking and for hearing what is spoken; and it is man's habit, too, to desire to look with idle eyes

on all that happens. What can occur afterwards, or what can be wrought by men which has not been done already? What new thing is there worthy of mention, of which there has never yet been experience? For I think there is nothing which one may call new, or which, on considering it, one shall discover to be strange or unknown to those of old. But as former things are buried in oblivion, so also things that are now subsistent will in the course of time vanish utterly from the knowledge of those who shall come after us. And I speak not these things unadvisedly, as acting now the preacher. But all these things were carefully pondered by me when entrusted with the kingdom of the Hebrews in Jerusalem. And I examined diligently, and considered discreetly, the nature of all that is on earth, and I perceived it to be most various;

3 and I saw that to man it is given to labour upon earth, ever carried about by all different occasions of toil, and with no result of his work. And all things here below are full of the spirit of strangeness and abomination, so that it is not possible for one to retrieve them now; nay, rather it is not possible for one at all to conceive what utter vanity has taken possession of all human affairs. For once, on a time I communed with myself, and thought that then I was wiser in this than all that were before me, and I was expert in understanding parables and the natures of things. But I learned that I gave myself to such pursuits to no purpose, and that if wisdom follows knowledge, so troubles attend on wisdom.

CHAPTER II.

1 Judging, therefore, that it stood thus with this matter, I decided to turn to another manner of life, and to give myself to pleasure, and to take experience of various delights. And now I learned that all such things are vain; and I put a check on laughter, when it ran on carelessly; and restrained pleasure, according to the rule of moderation, and was bitterly wroth against it. And when I perceived that the soul is able to arrest the body in its disposition to intoxication and wine-bibbing, and that temperance makes lust its subject, I sought earnestly to observe what object of true worth and of real excellence is set before men, which they shall attain to in this present life. For I passed through all those other objects which are deemed worthiest, such as the erecting of lofty houses and the planting of vines, and in addition, the laying out of pleasure-grounds, and the acquisition and culture of all manner of fruit-bearing trees; and among them also large reservoirs for the reception of

water were constructed, and distributed so as to secure the plentiful irrigation of the trees. And I surrounded myself also with many domestics, both man-servants and maid-servants; and some of them I procured from abroad, and others I possessed and employed as born in my own house. And herds of four-fooled creatures, as well of cattle as of sheep, more numerous than any of those of old acquired, were made my property. And treasures of gold and silver flowed in upon me;

2 and I made the kings of all nations my dependants and tributaries. And very many choirs of male and female singers were trained to yield me pleasure by the practice of all-harmonious song. And I had banquetings; and for the service of this part of my pleasure, I got me select cup-bearers of both sexes beyond my reckoning, -so far did I surpass in these things those who reigned before me in Jerusalem. And thus it happened that the interests of wisdom declined with me, while the claims of evil appetency increased. For when I yielded myself to every allurements of the eyes, and to the violent passions of the heart, that make their attack from all quarters, and surrendered myself to the hopes held out by pleasures, I also made my will the bond-slave of all miserable delights. For thus my judgment was brought to such a wretched pass, that I thought these things good, and that it was proper for me to engage in them. At length, awaking and recovering my sight, I perceived that the things I had in hand were altogether sinful and very evil, and the deeds of a spirit not good. For now none of all the objects of men's choice seems to me worthy of approval, or greatly to be desired by a just mind.

3 Wherefore, having pondered at once the advantages of wisdom and the ills of folly, I should with reason admire that man greatly, who, being borne on in a thoughtless course, and afterwards arresting himself, should return to right and duty. For wisdom and folly, are widely separated, and they are as different from each other as day is from night. He, therefore, who makes choice of virtue, is like one who sees all things plainly, and looks upward, and who holdeth his ways in the time of clearest light. But he, on the other hand, who has involved himself in wickedness, is like a man who wanders helplessly about in a moonless night, as one who is blind, and deprived of the sight of things by his darkness. And when I considered the end of each of these modes of life, I found there was no profit in the latter; and by setting myself to be the companion of the foolish, I saw that I should receive the

wages of folly. For what advantage is there in those thoughts, or what profit is there in the multitude of words, where the streams of foolish speaking are flowing, as it were, from the fountain of folly? Moreover, there is nothing common to the wise man and to the fool, neither as regards the memory of men, nor as regards the recompense of God. And as to all the affairs of men, when they are yet apparently but beginning to be, the end at once surprises them.

⁴ Yet the wise man is never partaker of the same end with the foolish. Then also did I hate all my life, that had been consumed in vanities, and which I had spent with a mind engrossed in earthly anxieties. For, to speak in brief, all my affairs have been wrought by me with labour and pain, as the efforts of thoughtless impulse; and some other person, it may be a wise man or a fool, will succeed to them, I mean, the chill fruits of my toils. But when I cut myself off from these things, and cast them away, then did that real good which is set before man show itself to me,—namely, the knowledge of wisdom and the possession of manly virtue. And if a man neglects these things, and is inflamed with the passion for other things, such a man makes choice of evil instead of good, and goes after what is bad instead of what is excellent, and after trouble instead of peace; for he is distracted by every manner of disturbance, and is burdened with continual anxieties night and day, with oppressive labours of body as well as with ceaseless cares of mind,—his heart moving in constant agitation, by reason of the strange and senseless affairs that occupy him. For the perfect good does not consist in eating and drinking, although it is true that it is from God that their sustenance cometh to men; for none of those things which are given for our maintenance subsist without His providence.

⁵ But the good man who gets wisdom from God, gets also heavenly enjoyment; while, on the other hand, the evil man, smitten with ills divinely inflicted, and afflicted with the disease of lust, toils to amass much, and is quick to put him to shame who is honoured by God in presence of the Lord of all, proffering useless gifts, and making things deceitful and vain the pursuits of his own miserable soul.

CHAPTER III.

¹ For this present time is filled with all things that are most contrary to each other—births and deaths, the growth of plants and their uprooting, cures and killings, the building up and the pulling down of houses, weeping and

laughing, mourning and dancing. At this moment a man gathers of earth's products, and at another casts them away; and at one time he ardently desireth the beauty of woman, and at another he hateth it. Now he seeketh something, and again he loseth it; and now he keepeth, and again he casteth away; at one time he slayeth, and at another he is slain; he speaketh, and again he is silent; he loveth, and again he hateth. For the affairs of men are at one time in a condition of war, and at another in a condition of peace; while their fortunes are so inconstant, that from bearing the semblance of good, they change quickly into acknowledged ills. Let us have done, therefore, with vain labours. For all these things, as appears to me, are set to madden men, as it were, with their poisoned stings. And the ungodly observer of the times and seasons is agape for this world, exerting himself above measure to destroy the image of God, as one who has chosen to contend against it from the beginning onward to the end. I am persuaded, therefore, that the greatest good for man is cheerfulness and well-doing, and that this short-lived enjoyment, which alone is possible to us, comes from God only, if righteousness direct our doings.

² But as to those everlasting and incorruptible things which God hath firmly established, it is not possible either to take aught from them or to add aught to them. And to men in general, those things, in sooth, are fearful and wonderful; and those things indeed which have been, abide so; and those which are to be, have already been, as regards His foreknowledge. Moreover, the man who is injured has God as his helper. I saw in the lower parts the pit of punishment which receives the impious, but a different place allotted for the pious. And I thought with myself, that with God all things are judged and determined to be equal; that the righteous and the unrighteous, and objects with reason and without reason, are alike in His judgment. For that their time is measured out equally to all, and death impends over them, and in this the races of beasts and men are alike in the judgment of God, and differ from each other only in the matter of articulate speech; and all things else happen alike to them, and death receives all equally, not more so in the case of the other kinds of creatures than in that of men. For they have all the same breath of life, and men have nothing more; but all are, in one word, vain, deriving their present condition from the same earth, and destined to perish, and return to the same earth again. For it is uncertain regarding the souls of men, whether they shall fly upwards;

3 and regarding the others which the unreasoning creatures possess, whether they shall fall downward. And it seemed to me, that there is no other good save pleasure, and the enjoyment of things present. For I did not think it possible for a man, when once he has tasted death, to return again to the enjoyment of these things.

CHAPTER IV.

1 And leaving all these reflections, I considered and turned in aversion from all the forms of oppression which are done among men; whence some receiving injury weep and lament, who are struck down by violence in utter default of those who protect them, or who should by all means comfort them in their trouble. And the men who make might their right are exalted to an eminence, from which, however, they shall also fall. Yea, of the unrighteous and audacious, those who are dead fare better than those who are still alive. And better than both these is he who, being destined to be like them, has not yet come into being, since he has not yet touched the wickedness which prevails among men. And it became clear to me also how great is the envy which follows a man from his neighbours, like the sting of a wicked spirit; and I saw that he who receives it, and takes it as it were into his breast, has nothing else but to eat his own heart, and tear it, and consume both soul and body, finding inconsolable vexation in the good fortune of others. And a wise man would choose to have one of his hands full, if it were with ease and quietness, rather than both of them with travail and with the villany of a treacherous spirit. Moreover, there is yet another thing which I know to happen contrary to what is fitting, by reason of the evil will of man.

2 He who is left entirely alone, having neither brother nor son, but prospered with large possessions, lives on in the spirit of insatiable avarice, and refuses to give himself in any way whatever to goodness. Gladly, therefore, would I ask such an one for what reason he labours thus, fleeing with headlong speed from the doing of anything good, and distracted by the many various passions for making gain Far better than such are those who have taken up an order of life in common, from which they may reap the best blessings. For when two men devote themselves in the right spirit to the same objects, though some mischance befalls the one, he has still at least no slight alleviation in having his companion by him. And the greatest of all calamities to a man in evil fortune is the want of a friend to help and cheer him. And those who live together both double the good fortune that befalls

them, and lessen the pressure of the storm of disagreeable events; so that in the day they are distinguished for their frank confidence in each other, and in the night they appear notable for their cheerfulness. But he who leads a solitary life passes a species of existence full of terror to himself; not perceiving that if one should fall upon men welded closely together, he adopts a rash and perilous course, and that it is not easy to snap the threefold cord.

3 Moreover, I put a poor youth, if he be wise, before an aged prince devoid of wisdom, to whose thoughts it has never occurred that it is possible that a man may be raised from the prison to the throne, and that the very man who has exercised his power unrighteously shall at a later period be righteously cast out. For it may happen that those who are subject to a youth, who is at the same time sensible, shall be free from trouble,—those, I mean, who are his elders. Moreover, they who are born later cannot praise another, of whom they have had no experience, and are led by an unreasoning judgment, and by the impulse of a contrary spirit. But in exercising the preacher's office, keep thou this before thine eyes, that thine own life be rightly directed, and that thou prayest in behalf of the foolish, that they may get understanding, and know how to shun the doings of the wicked.

CHAPTER V.

1 Moreover, it is a good thing to use the tongue sparingly, and to keep a calm and rightly balanced heart in the exercise of speech. For it is not right to give utterance in words to things that are foolish and absurd, or to all that occur to the mind; but we ought to know and reflect, that though we are far separated from heaven, we speak in the hearing of God, and that it is good for us to speak without offence. For as dreams and visions of many kinds attend manifold cares of mind, so also silly talking is conjoined with folly. Moreover, see to it, that a promise made with a vow be made good in fact. This, too, is proper to fools, that they are unreliable. But be thou true to thy word, knowing that it is ranch better for thee not to vow or promise to do anything, than to vow and then fail of performance. And thou oughtest by all means to avoid the flood of base words, seeing that God will hear them. For the man who makes such things his study gets no more benefit by them than to see his doings brought to nought by God. For as the multitude of dreams is vain, so also the multitude of words. But the fear of God is man's salvation, though it is rarely found. Wherefore thou oughtest not to wonder

though thou seest the poor oppressed, and the judges misinterpreting the law.

² But thou oughtest to avoid the appearance of surpassing those who are in power. For even should this prove to be the case, yet, from the terrible ills that shall befall thee, wickedness of itself will not deliver thee. But even as property acquired by violence is a most hurtful as well as impious possession, so the man who lusteth after money never finds satisfaction for his passion, nor good-will from his neighbours, even though he may have amassed the greatest possible wealth. For this also is vanity. But goodness greatly rejoiceth those who hold by it, and makes them strong, imparting to them the capacity of seeing through all things. And it is a great matter also not to be engrossed by such anxieties: for the poor man, even should he be a slave, and unable to fill his belly plentifully, enjoys at least the kind refreshment of sleep; but the lust of riches is attended by sleepless nights and anxieties of mind. And what could there be then more absurd, than with much anxiety and trouble to amass wealth, and keep it with jealous care, if all the while one is but maintaining the occasion of countless evils to himself? And this wealth, besides, must needs perish some time or other, and be lost, whether he who has acquired it has children or not; and the man himself, however unwillingly, is doomed to die, and return to earth in the selfsame condition in which it was his lot once to come into being.

³ And the fact that he is destined thus to leave earth with empty hands, will make the evil all the sorer to him, as he fails to consider that an end is appointed for his life similar to its beginning, and that he toils to no profit, and labours rather for the wind, as it were, than for the advancement of his own real interest, wasting his whole life in most unholy lusts and irrational passions, and withal in troubles and pains. And, to speak shortly, his days are darkness to such a man, and his life is sorrow. Yet this is in itself good, and by no means to be despised. For it is the gift of God, that a man should be able to reap with gladness of mind the fruits of his labours, receiving thus possessions bestowed by God, and not acquired by force. For neither is such a man afflicted with troubles, nor is he for the most part the slave of evil thoughts; but he measures out his life by good deeds, being of good heart in all things, and rejoicing in the gift of God.

CHAPTER VI.

¹ Moreover, I shall exhibit in discourse the ill-fortune that most of all prevails among men. While God may supply a man with all that is according to his mind, and deprive him of no object which may in any manner appeal to his desires, whether it be wealth, or honour, or any other of those things for which men distract themselves; yet the man, while thus prospered in all things, as though the only ill inflicted on him from heaven were just the inability to enjoy them, may but husband them for his fellow, and fall without profit either to himself or to his neighbours. This I reckon to be a strong proof and clear sign of surpassing evil. The man who has borne without blame the name of father of very many children, and spent a long life, and has not had his soul filled with good for so long time, and has had no experience of death meanwhile, -this man I should not envy either his numerous offspring or his length of days; nay, I should say that the untimely birth that falls from a woman's womb is better than he. For as that came in with vanity, so it also departeth secretly in oblivion, without having tasted the ills of life or looked on the sun. And this is a lighter evil than for the wicked man not to know what is good, even though he measure his life by thousands of years. And the end of both is death.

² The fool is proved above all things by his finding no satisfaction in any lust. But the discreet man is not held captive by these passions. Yet, for the most part, righteousness of life leads a man to poverty. And the sight of curious eyes deranges many, inflaming their mind, and drawing them on to vain pursuits by the empty desire of show. Moreover, the things which are now are known already; and it be comes apparent that than is unable to contend with those that are above him. And, verily, inanities have their course among men, which only increase the folly of those who occupy themselves with them.

CHAPTER VII.

¹ For though a man should be by no means greatly advantaged by knowing all in this life that is destined to befall him according to his mind (let us suppose such a case), nevertheless with the officious activity of men he devises means for prying into and gaining an apparent acquaintance with the things that are to happen after a person's death. Moreover, a good name is more pleasant to the mind than oil to the body; and the end of life is better than

the birth, and to mourn is more desirable than to revel, and to be with the sorrowing is better than to be with the drunken. For this is the fact, that he who comes to the end of life has no further care about alight around him. And discreet anger is to be preferred to laughter; for by the severe disposition of countenance the soul is kept upright. The souls of the wise, indeed, are sad and downcast, but those of fools are elated, and given loose to merriment. And yet it is far more desirable to receive blame from one wise man, than to become a hearer of a whole chorus of worthless and miserable men in their songs. For the laughter of fools is like the crackling of many thorns burning in a fierce fire. This, too, is misery, yea the greatest of evils, namely oppression; for it intrigues against the souls of the wise, and attempts to ruin the noble way of life which the good pursue.

² Moreover, it is right to commend not the man who begins, but the man who finishes a speech; and what is moderate ought to approve itself to the mind, and not what is swollen and inflated. Again, one ought certainly to keep wrath in check, and not suffer himself to be carried rashly into anger, the slaves of which are fools. More over, they are in error who assert that a better manner of life was given to those before us, and they fail to see that wisdom is widely different from mere abundance of possessions, and that it is as much more lustrous than these, as silver shines more brightly than its shadow. For the life of man hath its excellence not in the acquisition of perishable riches, but in wisdom. And who shall be able, tell me, to declare the providence of God, which is so great and so beneficent? or who shall be able to recall the things which seem to have been passed by of God? And in the former days of my vanity I considered all things, and saw a righteous man continuing in his righteousness, and ceasing not from it until death, but even suffering injury by reason thereof, and a wicked man perishing with his wickedness. Moreover, it is proper that the righteous man should not seem to be so overmuch, nor exceedingly and above measure wise, that he may not, as in making some slip, seem to sin many times over.

³ And be not thou audacious and precipitate, lest an untimely death surprise thee. It is the greatest of all good to take hold of God, and by abiding in Him to sin in nothing. For to touch things undefiled with an impure hand is abomination. But he who in the fear of God submits himself, escapes all that is contrary. Wisdom availeth more in the way of help than a band of the most powerful men in a city, and it often also pardons righteously those

who fail in duty. For there is not one that stumbleth not. Also it becomes thee in no way to attend upon the words of the impious, that thou mayest not become an ear-witness of words spoken against thyself, such as the foolish talk of a wicked servant, and being thus stung in heart, have recourse afterwards thyself to cursing in turn in many actions. And all these things have I known, having received wisdom from God, which afterwards I lost, and was no longer able to be the same. For wisdom fled from me to an infinite distance, and into a measureless deep, so that I could no longer get hold of it. Wherefore afterwards I abstained altogether from seeking it; and I no longer thought of considering the follies and the vain counsels of the impious, and their weary, distracted life. And being thus disposed, I was borne on to the things themselves;

⁴and being seized with a fatal passion, I knew woman—that she is like a snare or some such other object. For her heart ensnares those who pass her; and if she but join hand to hand, she holds one as securely as though she dragged him on bound with chains. And from her you can secure your deliverance only by finding a propitious and watchful superintendent in God; for he who is enslaved by sin cannot (otherwise) escape its grasp. Moreover, among all women I sought for the chastity proper to them, and I found it in none. And verily a person may find one man chaste among a thousand, but a woman never. And this above all things I observed, that men being made by God simple in mind, contract for themselves manifold reasonings and infinite questionings, and while professing to seek wisdom, waste their life in vain words.

CHAPTER VIII.

¹Moreover, wisdom, when it is found in a man, shows itself also in its possessor's face, and makes his countenance to shine; as, on the other hand, effrontery convicts the man in whom it has taken up its abode, so soon as he is seen, as one worthy of hatred. And it is on every account right to give careful heed to the words of the king, and by all manner of means to avoid an oath, especially one taken in the name of God. It may be fit at the same time to notice an evil word, but then it is necessary to guard against any blasphemy against God. For it will not be possible to find fault with Him when He inflicts any penalty, nor to gainsay the decrees of the Only Lord and King. But it will be better and more profitable for a man to abide by the holy commandments, and to keep himself apart from the words of the wicked. For

the wise man knows and discerneth beforehand the judgment, which shall come at the right time, and sees that it shall be just. For all things in the life of men await the retribution from above; but the wicked man does not seem to know verily that as there is a mighty providence over him, nothing in the future shall be hid. He knoweth not indeed the things which shall be; for no man shall be able to announce any one of them to him duly:

²for no one shall be found so strong as to be able to prevent the angel who spoils him of his life; neither shall any means be devised for cancelling in any way the appointed time of death. But even as the man who is captured in the midst of the battle can only see flight cut off on every side, so all the impiety of man perisheth utterly together. And I am astonished, as often as I contemplate what and how great things men have studied to do for the hurt of their neighbours. But this I know, that the impious are snatched prematurely from this life, and put out of the way because they have given themselves to vanity. For whereas the providential judgment of God does not overtake all speedily, by reason of His great long-suffering, and the wicked is not punished immediately on the commission of his offences,-for this reason he thinks that he may sin the more, as though he were to get off with impunity, not understanding that the transgressor shall not escape the knowledge of God even after a long interval. This, moreover, is the chief good, to reverence God; for if once the impious man fall away from Him, he shall not be suffered long to misuse his own folly. But a most vicious and false opinion often prevails among men concerning both the righteous and the unrighteous. For they form a judgment contrary to truth regarding each of them;

³and the man who is really righteous does not get the credit of being so, while, on the other hand, the impious man is deemed prudent and upright. And this I judge to be among the most grievous of errors. Once, indeed, I thought that the chief good consisted in eating and drinking, and that he was most highly favoured of God who should enjoy these things to the utmost in his life; and I fancied that this kind of enjoyment was the only comfort in life. And, accordingly, I gave heed to nothing but to this conceit, so that neither by night nor by day did I withdraw myself from all those things which have ever been discovered to minister luxurious delights to men. And this much I learned thereby, that the man who mingles in these things shall by no means be able, however sorely he may labour with them, to find the real good.

CHAPTER IX.

¹Now I thought at that time that all men were judged worthy of the same things. And if any wise man practised righteousness, and withdrew himself from unrighteousness, and as being sagacious avoided hatred with all (which, indeed, is a thing well pleasing to God), this man seemed to me to labour in vain. For there seemed to be one end for the righteous and for the impious, for the good and for the evil, for the pure and for the impure, for him that worshipped God, and for him that worshipped not. For as the unrighteous man and the good, the man who sweareth a false oath, and the man who avoids swearing altogether, were suspected by me to be driving toward the same end, a certain sinister opinion stole secretly into my mind, that all men come to their end in a similar way. But now I know that these are the reflections of fools, and errors and deceits. And they assert largely, that he who is dead has perished utterly, and that the living is to be preferred to the dead, even though he may lie in darkness, and pass his life-journey after the fashion of a dog, which is better at least than a dead lion. For the living know this at any rate, that they are to die; but the dead know not anything, and there is no reward proposed to them after they have completed their necessary course. Also hatred and love with the dead have their end;

²for their envy has perished, and their life also is extinguished. And he has a portion in nothing who has once gone hence. Error harping still on such a string, gives also such counsel as this: What meanest thou, O man, that thou dost not enjoy thyself delicately, and gorge thyself with all manner of pleasant food, and fill thyself to the full with wine? Dost thou not perceive that these things are given us from God for our unrestrained enjoyment? Put on newly washed attire, and anoint thy head with myrrh, and see this woman and that, and pass thy vain life vainly. For nothing else remaineth for thee but this, neither here nor after death. But avail thou thyself of all that chanceth; for neither shall any one take account of thee for these things, nor are the things that are done by men known at all outside the circle of men. And Hades, whatever that may be, whereunto we are said to depart, has neither wisdom nor understanding. These are the things which men of vanity speak. But I know assuredly, that neither shall they who seem the swiftest accomplish that great race; nor shall those who are esteemed mighty and terrible in the judgment of men, overcome in that terrible battle. Neither, again, is prudence proved by abundance of bread, nor is understanding wont

to consort with riches. Nor do I congratulate those who think that all shall find the same things befall them.

3 But certainly those who indulge such thoughts seem to me to be asleep, and to fail to consider that, caught suddenly like fishes and birds, they will be consumed with woes, and meet speedily their proper retribution. Also I estimate wisdom at so high a price, that I should deem a small and poorly-peopled city, even though besieged also by a mighty king with his forces, to be indeed great and powerful, if it had but one wise man, however poor, among its citizens. For such a man would be able to deliver his city both from enemies and from entrenchments. And other men, it may be, do not recognise that wise man, poor as he is; but for my part I greatly prefer the power that resides in wisdom, to this might of the mere multitude of the people. Here, however, wisdom, as it dwells with poverty, is held in dishonour. But hereafter it shall be heard speaking with more authoritative voice than princes and despots who seek after things evil. For wisdom is also stronger than iron; while the folly of one individual works danger for many, even though he be an object of contempt to many.

CHAPTER X.

1 Moreover, flies falling into myrrh, and suffocated therein, make both the appearance of that pleasant ointment and the anointing therewith an unseemly thing; and to be mindful of wisdom and of folly together is in no way proper. The wise man, indeed, is his own leader to right actions; but the fool inclines to erring courses, and will never make his folly available as a guide to what is noble. Yea, his thoughts also are vain and full of folly. But if ever a hostile spirit fall upon thee, my friend, withstand it courageously, knowing that God is able to propitiate even a mighty multitude of offences. These also are the deeds of the prince and father of all wickedness: that the fool is set on high, while the man richly gifted with wisdom is humbled; and that the slaves of sin are seen riding on horseback, while men dedicated to God walk on foot in dishonour, the wicked exulting the while. But if any one devises another's hurt, he forgets that he is preparing a snare for himself first and alone. And he who wrecks another's safety, shall fall by the bite of a serpent. But he who removeth stones, indeed shall undergo no light labour; and he who cleaveth wood shall bear danger with him in his own weapon. And if it chance that the axe spring out of the handle, he who engages in such work

shall be put to trouble, gathering for no good and having to put to more of his iniquitous and shortlived strength.

² The bite of a serpent, again, is stealthy; and the charmers will not soothe the pain, for they are vain. But the good man doeth good works for himself and for his neighbours alike; while the fool shall sink into destruction through his folly. And when he has once opened his mouth, he begins foolishly and soon comes to an end, exhibiting his senselessness in all. Moreover, it is impossible for man to know anything, or to learn from man either what has been from the beginning, or what shall be in the future. For who shall be the declarer thereof? Besides, the man who knows not to go to the good city, sustains evil in the eyes and in the whole countenance. And I prophesy woes to that city the king of which is a youth, and its rulers gluttons. But I call the good land blessed, the king of which is the son of the free: there those who are entrusted with the power of ruling shall reap what is good in due season. But the sluggard and the idler become scoffers, and make the house decay; and misusing all things for the purposes of their own gluttony, like the ready slaves of money, for a small price they are content to do all that is base and abject. It is also right to obey kings and rulers or potentates, and not to be bitter against them, nor to utter any offensive word against them.

³ For there is ever the risk that what has been spoken in secret may somehow become public. For swift and winged messengers convey all things to Him who alone is King both rich and mighty, discharging therein a service which is at once spiritual and reasonable.

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Moreover, it is a righteous thing to give (to the needy) of thy bread, and of those things which are necessary for the support of man's life. For though thou seemest forthwith to waste it upon some persons, as if thou didst cast thy bread upon the water, yet in the progress of time thy kindness shall be seen to be not unprofitable for thee. Also give liberally, and give a portion of thy means to many; for thou knowest not what the coming day doeth. The clouds, again, do not keep back their plenteous rains, but discharge their showers upon the earth. Nor does a tree stand for ever; but even though men may spare it, it shall be overturned by the wind at any rate. But many desire also to know beforehand what is to come from the heavens; and there have been those who, scrutinizing the clouds and waiting for the wind, have had

nought to do with reaping and winnowing, putting their trust in vanity, and being all incapable of knowing aught of what may come from God in the future; just as men cannot tell what the woman with child shall bring forth. But sow thou in season, and thus reap thy fruits whenever the time for that comes on. For it is not manifest what shall be better than those among all natural things. Would, indeed, that all things turned out well!

² Truly, when a man considers with himself that the sun is good, and that this life is sweet, and that it is a pleasant thing to have many years wherein one can delight himself continually, and that death is a terror and an endless evil, and a thing that brings us to nought, he thinks that he ought to enjoy himself in all the present and apparent pleasures of life. And he gives this counsel also to the young, that they should use to the uttermost the season of their youth, by giving up their minds to all manner of pleasure, and indulge their passions, and do all that seemeth good in their own eyes, and look upon that which delighteth, and avert themselves from that which is not so. But to such a man I shall say this much: Senseless art thou, my friend, in that thou dost not look for the judgment that shall come from God upon all these things. And profligacy and licentiousness are evil, and the filthy wantonness of our bodies carries death in it. For folly attends on youth, and folly leads to destruction.

CHAPTER XII.

¹ Moreover, it is ficht that thou shouldest fear God while thou art yet young, before thou givest thyself over to evil things, and before the great and terrible day of God cometh, when the sun shall no longer shine, neither the moon, nor the rest of the stars, but when in that storm and commotion of all things, the powers above shall be moved, that is, the angels who guard the world; so that the mighty men shall fail, and the women shall cease their labours, and shall flee into the dark places of their dwellings, and shall have all the doors shut. And a woman shall be restrained from grinding by fear, and shall speak with the weakest voice, like the tiniest bird; and all the impure women shall sink into the earth; and cities and their blood-stained governments shall wait for the vengeance that comes from above, while the most bitter and bloody of all times hangs over them like a blossoming almond, and continuous punishments impend like a multitude of flying locusts, and the transgressors are cast out of the way like a black and despicable caper-plant. And the good man shall depart with rejoicing to his own everlasting

habitation; but the vile shall fill all their places with wailing, and neither silver laid up in store, nor proved gold, shall be of use any more.

² For a mighty stroke shall fall upon all things, even to the pitcher that standeth by the well, and the wheel of the vessel which may chance to have been left in the hollow, when the course of time comes to its end and the ablution-bearing period of a life that is like water has passed away. And for men who lie on earth there is but one salvation, that their souls acknowledge and wing their way to Him by whom they have been made. I say, then, again what I have said already, that man's estate is altogether vain, and that nothing can exceed the utter vanity which attaches to the objects of man's inventions. And superfluous is my labour in preaching discreetly, inasmuch as I am attempting to instruct a people here, so indisposed to receive either teaching or healing. And truly the noble man is needed for the understanding of the words of wisdom. Moreover, I, though already aged, and having passed a long life, laboured to find out those things which are well-pleasing to God, by means of the mysteries of the truth. And I know that the mind is no less quickened and stimulated by the precepts of the wise, than the body is wont to be when the goad is applied, or a nail is fastened in it.

³ And some will render again those wise lessons which they have received from one good pastor and teacher, as if all with one mouth and in mutual concord set forth in larger detail the truths committed to them. But in many words there is no profit. Neither do I counsel thee, my friend, to write down vain things about what is fitting, from which there is nothing to be gained but weary labour. But, in fine, I shall require to use some such conclusion as this: O men, behold, I charge you now expressly and shortly, that ye fear God, who is at once the Lord and the Overseer of all, and that ye keep also His commandments; and that ye believe that all shall be judged severally in the future, and that every man shall receive the just recompense for his deeds, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

Canonical Epistle

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

c. AD 213–270

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Neocaesarea, called the Wonderworker.

CANON I.

The meats are no burden to us, most holy father, if the captives ate things which their conquerors set before them, especially since there is one report from all, viz., that the barbarians who have made inroads into our parts have not sacrificed to idols. For the apostle says, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them." But the Saviour also, who cleanseth all meats, says, "Not that which goeth into a man defileth the man, but that which cometh out." And this meets the case of the captive women defiled by the barbarians, who outraged their bodies. But if the previous life of any such person convicted him of going, as it is written, after the eyes of fornicators, the habit of fornication evidently becomes an object of suspicion also in the time of captivity. And one ought not readily to have communion with such women in prayers. If any one, however, has lived in the utmost chastity, and has shown in time past a manner of life pure and free from all suspicion, and now falls into wantonness through force of necessity, we have an example for our guidance, -namely, the instance of the damsel in Deuteronomy, whom a man finds in the field, and forces her and lies with her. "Unto the damsel," he says, "ye shall do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter: the damsel cried, and there was none to help her."

CANON II.

¹ Covetousness is a great evil; and it is not possible in a single letter to set forth those scriptures in which not robbery alone is declared to be a thing horrible and to be abhorred, but in general the grasping mind, and the dis-

position to meddle with what belongs to others, in order to satisfy the sordid love of gain. And all persons of that spirit are excommunicated from the Church of God. But that at the time of the irruption, in the midst of such woful sorrows and bitter lamentations, some should have been audacious enough to consider the crisis which brought destruction to all the very period for their own private aggrandizement, that is a thing which can be averred only of men who are impious and hated of God, and of unsurpassable iniquity. Wherefore it seemed good to excommunicate such persons, lest the wrath (of God) should come upon the whole people, and upon those first of all who are set over them in office, and yet fail to make inquiry. For I am afraid, as the Scripture says, lest the impious work the destruction of the righteous along with his own. "For fornication," it says, "and covetousness are things on account of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:

2 walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light. In this wise speaks the apostle. But if certain parties who pay the proper penalty for that former covetousness of theirs, which exhibited itself in the time of peace, now turn aside again to the indulgence of covetousness in the very time of trouble (i.e., in the troubles of the inroads by the barbarians), and make gain out of the blood and ruin of men who have been utterly despoiled, or taken captive, (or) put to death, what else ought to be expected, than that those who struggle so hotly for covetousness should heap up wrath both for themselves and for the Whole people?

CANON III.

Behold, did not Achar the son of Zata transgress in the accursed thing, and trouble then lighted on all the congregation of Israel? And this one man was alone in his sin; but he was not alone in the death that came by his sin. And by us, too, everything of a gainful kind at this time, which is ours not in our own rightful possession, but as property strictly belonging to others, ought to be reckoned a thing devoted. For that Achar indeed took of the spoil; and those men of the present time take also of the spoil. But he took what be-

longed to enemies; whine these now take what belongs to brethren, and aggrandize themselves with fatal gains.

CANON IV.

Let no one deceive himself, nor put forward the pretext of having found such property. For it is not lawful, even for a man who has found anything, to aggrandize himself by it. For Deuteronomy says: "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray in the way, and pay no heed to them; but thou shalt in any wise bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother come not nigh thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring them together, and they shall be with thee until thy brother seek after them, and thou shalt restore them to him again. And in like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt thou do with his raiment, and so shalt thou do with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou mayest find." Thus much in Deuteronomy. And in the book of Exodus it is said, with reference not only to the case of finding what is a friend's, but also of finding what is an enemy's: "Thou shalt surely bring them back to the house of their master again." And if it is not lawful to aggrandize oneself at the expense of another, whether he be brother or enemy, even in the time of peace, when he is living at his ease and delicately, and without concern as to his property, how much more must it be the case when one is met by adversity, and is fleeing from his enemies, and has had to abandon his possessions by force of circumstances!

CANON V.

But others deceive themselves by fancying that they can retain the property of others which they may have found as an equivalent for their own property which they have lost. In this way verily, just as the Boradi and Goths brought the havoc of war on them, they make themselves Boradi and Goths to others. Accordingly we have sent to you our brother and comrade in old age, Euphrosynus, with this view, that he may deal with you in accordance with our model here, and teach you against whom you ought to admit accusations, and whom you ought to exclude from your prayers.

CANON VI.

Moreover, it has been reported to us that a thing has happened in your country which is surely incredible, and which, if done at all, is altogether the work of unbelievers, and impious men, and men who know not the very

name of the Lord; to wit, that some have gone to such a pitch of cruelty and inhumanity, as to be detaining by force certain captives who have made their escape. Dispatch ye commissioners into the country, lest the thunderbolts of heaven fall all too surely upon those who perpetrate such deeds.

CANON VII.

Now, as regards those who have been enrolled among the barbarians, and have accompanied them in their irruption in a state of captivity, and who, forgetting that they were from Pontus, and Christians, have become such thorough barbarians, as even to put those of their own race to death by the gibbet or strangulation, and to show their roads or houses to the barbarians, who else would have been ignorant of them, it is necessary for you to debar such persons even from being auditors in the public congregations, until some common decision about them is come to by the saints assembled in council, and by the Holy Spirit antecedently to them.

CANON VIII.

Now those who have been so audacious as to invade the houses of others, if they have once been put on their trial and convicted, ought not to be deemed fit even to be hearers in the public congregation. But if they have declared themselves and made restitution, they should be placed in the rank of the repentant.

CANON IX.

Now, those who have found in the open field or in their own houses anything left behind them by the barbarians, if they have once been put on their trial and convicted, ought to fall under the same class of the repentant. But if they, have declared themselves and made restitution, they ought to be deemed fit for the privilege of prayer.

CANON X.

And they who keep the commandment ought to keep it without any sordid covetousness, demanding neither recompense, nor reward, nor fee, nor anything else that bears the name of acknowledgment.

CANON XI.

Weeping takes place without the gate of the oratory; and the offender standing there ought to implore the faithful as they enter to offer up prayer on his behalf. Waiting on the word, again, takes place within the gate in the porch,

where the offender ought to stand until the catechumens depart, and thereafter he should go forth. For let him hear the Scriptures and doctrine, it is said, and then be put forth, and reckoned unfit for the privilege of prayer. Submission, again, is that one stand within the gate of the temple, and go forth along with the catechumens. Restoration is that one be associated with the faithful, and go not forth with the catechumens; and last of all comes the participation in the holy ordinances.

Homily concerning the Holy Mother of God, ever-virgin

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

c. AD 213–270

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Neocaesarea, called the Wonderworker.

HOMILY CONCERNING THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, EVER-VIRGIN

ON AN ANTE-NICENE HOMILY OF GREGORY THAUMATURGUS. — NOTE OF TRANSLATOR (F. C. CONYBEARE).

[The following Armenian homily of Gregory Thaumaturgus was printed for the first time in the journal called *Ararat*, of the convent of Etschmiadzin, for September, 1895. It is unknown in Greek. The text so printed, and here translated, is contained in an old book of homilies in the Etschmiadzin library. It is also found in a MS. of San Lazaro, Djarrentir, No. 3; but apparently without title. It is quite in the style of the other homilies ascribed to this father. These are by some (e.g., Harnack, *Altchristliche Literatur bis Eusebius*, p. 431) accounted spurious. Why I cannot understand; for they are found, whether in Greek, or in Syriac, or in Armenian, with the constant ascription to this Gregory. Why should a later age have forged an entire series of homilies and ascribed them to him? If they were *Tentenzschriften*, i.e., homilies written with a certain and marked doctrinal bias of some kind, their forgery would be intelligible. But they cannot be accused of being this. They are just the pious and rather rhetorical outpourings of a devout and simple mind.

This homily may therefore be accepted as an example of the Pulpit eloquence of this Gregory. About the middle of the third century it must have stirred some congregation in Neo-Caesarea. It is very florid, and in its refrains more like a hymn than a sermon. To a modern reader it must needs appear a rather tawdry effort. But the image of Christ as Spring in §26 in a measure redeems the whole piece, and some other thoughts as well are prettily worked out. The Armenian is often obscure, and contains several com-

pounds not otherwise known. I have rendered it quite literally. It was made from Greek. For convenience I have broken it up into sections, adding in square brackets the few words required here and there to make grammar or sense.----F. C. C.] The Homily of St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, concerning the Holy Mother of God, ever-virgin. 1. When I remember the disobedience of Eve, I weep. But when I view the fruit of Mary, I am again renewed. Deathless by descent, invisible through beauty, before the ages light of light; of God the Father wast Thou begotten; being Word and Son of God, Thou didst take on flesh from Mary Virgin, in order that Thou mightest renew afresh Adam fashioned by Thy holy hand.

2. Holy, deathless, eternal, inaccessible, without change, without turn, True Son of God art Thou before the ages; yet wast pleased to be conceived and formed in the womb of the Holy Virgin, in order that Thou mightest make alive once more man first fashioned by Thy holy hand, but dead through sin. 3. By the good pleasure Thou didst issue forth, by the good pleasure and will of the invisible Father. Wherefore we all invoke Thee, calling Thee King. Be Thou our succour; Thou that wast born of the Virgin and wrapt in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger, and wast suckled by Mary; to the end that Thou mightest make alive once more the first-created Adam that was dead through sin. 4. Feasted with knowledge from the Divine knowledge, let us emit like a fountain the sweetly sounding hymns of praise; let us glorify the sweet powers of the Divine Word. With sweetly sounding doctrine let us send forth praise worthy of the Divine grace; forasmuch as earth, and sea, and all created things, visible and invisible, bless and glorify God's love for man; for that His majesty was among [us]. For being God He appeared in the flesh, and taking on Himself extreme humility, was born of the Holy Virgin, to the end that He might renew afresh him that was dead through disobedience.

5. Turn ye, O congregations, and come. Let us all praise Him that is born of the Virgin. For that being the glory and image before the ages of the Godhead, He yet became a fellow-sufferer with us of poverty. Being the exceeding magnificent power [and] image of God, He took on the form of a slave. He that putteth on the light as a garment, consorted with men as one that is vile. He that is hymned by cherubim and by myriad angels, as a citizen on earth doth He live. He that being before (all) maketh all creation alive, was born of the Holy Virgin, in order that He might make alive once

more the first created. 6. Christ our God took on [Himself] to begin life as man (lit. the beginning of humanity), being yet a sharer of the [life] without beginning of God the Father; in order to lift up unto the beginningless beginning of the Godhead man that was fallen.

7. And He took the form of a slave from the Holy Virgin, in order to call us up to the glorified dominical image. He put on the outward shape made of clay, that He might make [us] sharers of the heavenly form. He sat in the lap of the Holy Virgin, that He might place us on the right hand in the intimacy of His Father. In a vile body was He; and by means of the same He was laid in a tomb, that He might manifest us heirs of eternal life. In the womb of the Holy Virgin was He, the incomprehensible (or inaccessible) one, confined; in order that He might renew the Adam destroyed through sin. 8. Power of the Father and living font, Christ our God, [He] is the life-fraught mystery, in whom even through [His] living voice we believed; life without end He freely bestows on those who hope in Him, and with the Spirit of grace He illumines the races of men. From this fountain, living and ever-flowing and of sweet taste, whosoever in faith are athirst are filled and sated.

9. Wherefore even with one voice [let us sing the praises] of God the Word, that according to the worthiness of each is cause and promoter of salvation, unto young men and old, and unto children and women. For from Mary, the divine fountain of the ineffable Godhead, gushes forth grace and free gift of the Holy Spirit. From a single Holy Virgin the Pearl of much price proceeded, in order to make alive once more the first-created man that was dead through sin. 10. He is the Sun of Righteousness, dawning upon earth; and in the fashion of a man He deigned to come unto our race. Having hidden in the coarse matter of humanity the effulgent splendour of His Godhead, and having filled [us] with the Divine Spirit, He hath also made us worthy to sing unto Him the angelic hymn of praise. 11. Let us twine, as with a wreath, the souls (or selves) [of them that love the festival and love to hearken] with golden blossoms, fain to be crowned with wreaths from the unfading gardens; and offering in our hands the fair-fruited flowers of Christ, let us gather [them]. For the God-like temple of the Holy Virgin is meet to be glorified with such a crown; because the illumining Pearl cometh forth, to the end that it may raise up again into the ever-streaming light them that were gone down into darkness and the shadow of death.

12. Regaled with the medicine (lit. poison) of the Divine words of Christ unto the grace of the same, let us send up unto Him some worthy hymn. Let us hasten to gather up the fruits of the mystery of immortality. Let us hasten to inhale the perfume of the God-clad symmetry (or harmony). In [our] language let us luxuriate in the Divine grace, and let us hasten to drive away from us the foul odour of sin. Let us rather clothe us in the sweet savour of the works of righteousness. Having put on ourselves the breastplate of faith, and the garb of a virtuous life, and the holy and spotless raiment of purity, let us fast (or? keep guard). For He is excellence, and hath His dwelling with peace, and is yoke-fellow of love and consorteth [therewith]; a blossom smelling of hope. And the lambs which in faith browse upon this shoot forth the light-like rod of the Trinity. But we, O my friends, resorting to the garden of the Saviour, let us praise the Holy Virgin; saying along with the angels in the language of Divine grace, "Rejoice thou and be glad." For from her first shone forth the eternally radiant light, that lighteth us with its goodness.

13. The Holy Virgin is herself both an honourable temple of God and a shrine made pure, and a golden altar of whole burnt offerings. By reason of her surpassing purity [she is] the Divine incense of oblation (= προθέσεως), and oil of the holy grace, and a precious vase bearing in itself the true nard; [yea and] the priestly diadem revealing the good pleasure of God, whom she alone approacheth holy in body and soul. [She is] the door which looks eastward, and by the comings in and goings forth the whole earth is illuminated. The fertile olive from which the Holy Spirit took the fleshly slip (or twig) of the Lord, and saved the suffering race of men. She is the boast of virgins, and the joy of mothers; the declaration of archangels, even as it was spoken: "Be thou glad and rejoice, the Lord with thee"; and again, "from thee"; in order that He may make new once more the dead through sin.

14. Thou didst allow her to remain a virgin, and wast pleased, O Lord, to lie in the Virgin's womb, sending in advance the archangel to announce it [to her]. But he from above, from the ineffable hosts, came unto Mary, and first heralded to her the tidings: "Be thou glad and rejoice." And he also added, "The Lord with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." But she was in tumult, and pondered in her mind what sort of tidings was this. But then in seemly fashion, I ween, the grace chose out the Holy Virgin; for she was wise in all ways, nor was there her like

among women of all nations. 15. Not as the first virgin did she, being alone in the garden, with loose and effeminate thought accept the advice of the serpent and destroy the thought of her heart; through whom came all the toil and sorrow of the saint. But such was the Holy Virgin that by her the former's transgressions also were rectified. Nor, like Sarah, when she had good tidings that she would bear a son, did she rashly laugh; nor like Rebekah, who, with the temper of a deserter, accepted the ornaments, and willingly gave water to drink unto the camels of her betrothed. And unlike all other women, she did not accept the grace of greeting indiscreetly (or without testing it), but only through thought bright and clear (or through glittering thought).

16. Whence then dost thou bring with thee to us such a blessing? and [out] of what treasure-houses has been sent to us the Pearl of the Word? I would fain know what is the gift, and who is bearer of the Word, or indeed who is the sender thereof. From heaven thou earnest, the form of man thou displayest, and dost radiate forth a blaze (or torch) of light. 17. These things in herself the Holy Virgin asked in doubt. But the angel with such words as these solved her doubts: "The Holy Spirit shall come unto thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Wherefore thou shalt conceive and shalt bear a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus, unto the end that He save the race of men from the death of sin." 18. The Virgin spake in turn unto the angel: My mind swims in thy words as in a sea. How shall this be unto me? for I desire not to know an earthly man, because I have devoted myself to the heavenly Bridegroom. I desire to remain a virgin. I wish not to betray the honour of my virginity.

19. Again in such words as these the angel confirmed the holy Virgin: Fear not, Mary. For 'tis not to frighten thee I came, but to dispel all thought of fear. Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace at God's hands. Scan not too narrowly the grace, since it deigns not to give way to the laws of nature. The Holy Spirit shall come unto thee; wherefore that which is born of thee is holy and Son of God, sharer of the form and sharer of the substance, and sharer of the eternity of the Father; in whom the Father, having acquired all manifestations, hath the adumbration (? of Himself) face to face, and by means of the light the glory gleameth forth. 20. Great is the mystery. Thou hast learned, O Mary, that which till now was hidden from angels. Thou hast known that which deaf prophets and patriarchs heard not; and thou hast

heard that which the choirs of the God-clad were not ever held worthy to hear. David and Isaiah, and all the prophets foretold in their preaching about the Lord's becoming man. But do thou alone, O Holy Virgin, receive the mystery unknown by them, and learn and be not perplexed as to how this shall be unto thee. For He that fashioned man out of virgin soil, the Selfsame shall even now do as. He will for the salvation of His creature.

21. New radiance now of eternal light gleams forth for us in the inspired fitness (or harmony) of these words. Now is it meet and fitting for me to wonder after the manner of the Holy Virgin, to whom in seemly wise before all things the angel gave salutation thus: "Be thou glad and rejoice"; because with her are quickened and live, all the treasures of grace. Among all nations she alone was both virgin and mother and without knowledge of man, holy in body and soul. Among all nations she alone was made worthy to bring forth God; alone she carried in her Him who carries along all by His word. 22. And not only is it meet to marvel at the beauty of the Holy Mother of God, but also at the excellence of her spirit. Wherefore were addressed to her the words: "The Lord with thee"; and again also, "The Lord from thee." As if this: "He will save him that is in His image as being pitiful." As purse of the Divine mystery the Holy Virgin made herself ready, in which the Pearl of Life was enveloped in flesh and sealed; and she also became the receptacle of supramundane and Divine salvation.

23. Therefore let us also come, O my friends, and discharge our debt according to our ability; and following the voice of the archangel, let us cry aloud: "Be thou glad and rejoice; the Lord with thee." Nor any heavenly bridegroom He, but the very Lord Himself, the Father of purity and the guardian of virginity, and the Lord of holiness, the creator of inviolability, and the giver of freedom, overseer of salvation, and ordainer of true wisdom and bestower thereof----the Lord Himself with thee; for as much as even in thee the Divine grace reposed [and] upon thee, in order to make alive the race of men like a compassionate Lord. 24. Not any more doth Adam fear the crafty serpent; because our Lord is come and hath dispersed the host of the enemy. Not any more doth the race of men fear the craftiness and mad deceit of the serpent, because the Lord hath bruised the head of the dragon in the water of baptism. Not any more do I fear to hear the words: Dust thou wast, and unto dust shalt thou be turned. For the Lord in baptism hath washed away the stain of sin. Not any more do I weep, nor ever lament, nor

ever reckon it again to wretchedness, when the thorns wound me. For our Lord hath plucked out by the roots the sins which are our thorns, and hath crowned His head withal. Loosed is the first curse in which He said: Thorns and thistles shall earth bring forth to thee, for the thorn is plucked out by the roots, and the thistle withered up; and from the Holy Virgin hath shot up the tree of life and grace. No more doth Eva fear the reproach of the pangs of childbirth; for by the Holy Virgin her transgressions are blotted out and effaced; forasmuch as in her was God born, to the end that He might make alive him whom He made in His image.

25. A bulwark of imperishable life hath the Holy Virgin become unto us, and a fountain of light to those who have faith in Christ; a sunrise of the reasonable light is she found to be. Be thou glad and rejoice. The Lord with thee and from thee, who in His Godhead and His manhood is perfect, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead: "Be glad and rejoice, the Lord with thee and from thee" ----with His handmaid the Lord of glory; with her that is unspotted, He that halloweth all; with the beautiful, He who is wonderful in beauty above all the sons of men, to the end that He may make alive him whom He made in His image. 26. In the Divine words of the Teacher we believe and rejoice; for with roses and lilies and fragrant wreaths Christ, our imperishable Spring, hath come unto us, and hath filled the fair garden of the churches, even the seed-plots of our hearts, from the paradise of God. So then with holy heart let us draw nigh, and find the golden faith gleaming wide and the fruits of immortality smelling sweet therein. For in the desert of Mary the fair-fruited tree hath shot up, that like one holy and pitiful, He may make alive His creature.

27. Holy and wise in all things was the all-blessed Virgin; in all ways peerless among all nations, and unrivalled among women. Not as the first virgin Eva, who being alone in the garden, was in her weak mind led astray by the serpent; and so took his advice and brought death into the world; and because of that hath been all the suffering of saints. But in her alone, in this Holy Virgin Mary, the Stem of Life hath shot up for us. For she alone was spotless in soul and body. 28. With intrepid mind she spake to the angel: Whence is this salutation, and how shall this be unto me? Dost thou desire to learn how the exceeding magnifical power becomes a fellow-sufferer with us of our poverty? How He that hath power over the hosts assumes the image of our baseness; and how He who is God before the ages is about to become a

child and be made flesh, He that putteth on light as a garment and giveth life unto His creature. Grant me, said the Holy Virgin, to learn such an impenetrable mystery, and I become the vessel that receives the Divine mystery (or thought), being overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and [I am] to receive the truth of His flesh in my flesh, unto the building by Wisdom of her abode.

29. The Word becometh flesh and dwelleth in us, that is, in the same flesh, which it took from us; and by the spirit of its native self (or soul) it spiritualises [itself]. And the unchangeable God accepts the form of a slave, to the end that He be regarded by the faithful as man; but that He may be manifested as God to the unfaithful, in order to renew the first-created. 30. The element of flesh doth the Son of God take from the Holy Virgin, for before the ages He is God. He hath deigned to be born, and to be called Son of man, and to become visible, He the invisible; and for our sake to be poor, who is all riches; and to suffer as man, He the impassible and deathless. For with (or in) the flesh in truth He was united, but He was not changed in spirit. In a mortal body the Invisible One was enveloped, that He might make it also deathless, making it sharer of His deathlessness through His Godhead; to the end that He might renew him that was fashioned by His holy hands.

31. Glory and light are come into the world, Christ our God. He glorifies and illumines with His ever-streaming light, to whom the voice of the unseen Father bore witness: "Yonder is My Son and Word, who is before the ages." 32. But Mary was fortified by the word of the angel; but pondered in herself the birth of the Lord, confronted with the disparity of human thought. Now she lifted herself up to the lofty plane of the Divine, now again her mind was occupied with the lowliness of humanity. And thus as in the scale of reflection she balances the one and the other; even in that moment she becometh truly worthy of the design (or mind, or? entrance) of God. For she (or He) that preserved the treasure of her virginity pure and untarnished, she (or He) also made the boundaries of her heart inviolate. And the creature is saved which He made in His image.

33. Christ, Son of God, who was born of the Holy Virgin Mary, hath come as grace into the world; because by means of grace He hath made us alive, He that fashioned all things. Now that Christ is born into the world, doth all creation dance. He giveth in exchange His temptation, the coin of long-suffering, that He may claim (for us) the mansions of the kingdom.

The Holy Virgin was filled with joy because He took from her His flesh, to the end that He might raise again him that was fallen under sin. 34. Evil thoughts are turned from us, when we sing psalms to Thee, O heavenly and holy Father; beholding the great light which Thou hast given to us, Jesus Christ, who was born of the Holy Virgin and wrought by means of His Godhead wonders; but for our sake accepted sufferings by means of His flesh. We then also still being in the flesh will hasten in body and soul to make the Deity propitious to us with angelic hymns, touching with our hands in figurative wise the divine [element] of the dogma (?), and will sow in our minds (or in our mysteries) the truth of faith. For the mystery (or thought) is inaccessible, invisible, unchangeable, not to be circumscribed, worshipped in its fulness and marvelled at in [our] mind. For even the Holy Virgin herself had marvelled at the manner of the mystery (or thought). How could the splendour of light become the offspring of a woman? She embraced in herself the treasure of life, and pondered in her mind the salutation of the archangel; until in the completion (of time) she bore the fruit of salvation, that it might save (or make alive) man.

35. Therefore, O ye fair-fruited and comely branches of Christ's teaching, ye shall in this place bring to us the fruits of blessing (= εὐλογία). Here, where is all purity and fragrance, let us offer to God with holy conscience the incense of prayer. Here, where virginity and temperance dance together, bearing for fruit the life-giving cluster of grapes. Here, where they . . . unto us the . . . of victorious power and the treasure of love. Here, where the mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed by the archangel to the Holy Virgin according to the gospel: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. For Holy is that which is born of thee, Son of God." To whom be glory and honour for ever and ever. F. C. CONYBEARE.

The Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen

GREGORY THAUMATURGUS

c. AD 213–270

Pupil of Origen and bishop of Neocaesarea, called the Wonderworker.

ARGUMENT I-FOR EIGHT YEARS GREGORY HAS GIVEN UP THE PRACTICE OF ORATORY, BEING BUSIED WITH THE STUDY CHIEFLY OF ROMAN LAW AND THE LATIN LANGUAGE.

¹An excellent thing has silence proved itself in many another person on many an occasion, and at present it befits myself, too, most especially, who with or without purpose may keep the door of my lips, and feel constrained to be silent. For I am unpractised and unskilled in those beautiful and elegant addresses which are spoken or composed in a regular and unbroken train, in select and well-chosen phrases and words; and it may be that I am less apt by nature to cultivate successfully this graceful and truly Grecian art. Besides, it is now eight years since I chanced myself to utter or compose any speech, whether long or short; neither in that period have I heard any other compose or utter anything in private, or deliver in public any laudatory or controversial orations, with the exception of those admirable men who have embraced the noble study of philosophy, and who care less for beauty of language and elegance of expression. For, attaching only a secondary importance to the words, they aim, with all exactness, at investigating and making known the things themselves, precisely as they are severally constituted. Not indeed, in my opinion, that they: do not desire, but rather that they do greatly desire, to clothe the noble and accurate results of their thinking in noble and comely language.

²Yet it may be that they are not able so lightly to put forth this sacred and godlike power (faculty) in the exercise of its own proper conceptions, and at the same time to practise a mode of discourse eloquent in its terms,

and thus to comprehend in one and the same mind-and that, too, this little mind of man-two accomplishments, which are the gifts of two distinct persons, and which are, in truth, most contrary to each other. For silence is indeed the friend and helpmeet of thought and invention. But if one aims at readiness of speech and beauty of discourse, he will get at them by no other discipline than the study of words, and their constant practice. Moreover, another branch of learning occupies my mind completely, and the mouth binds the tongue if I should desire to make any speech, however brief, with the voice of the Greeks; I refer to those admirable laws of our sages by which the affairs of all the subjects of the Roman Empire are now directed, and which are neither composed nor learnt without difficulty. And these are wise and exact in themselves, and manifold and admirable, and, in a word, most thoroughly Grecian; and they are expressed and committed to us in the Roman tongue, which is a wonderful and magnificent sort of language, and one very aptly conformable to royal authority, but still difficult to me. Nor could it be otherwise with me, even though I might say that it was my desire that it should be.

³ And as our words are nothing else than a kind of imagery of the dispositions of our mind, we should allow those who have the gift of speech, like some good artists alike skilled to the utmost in their art and liberally furnished in the matter of colours, to possess the liberty of painting their word-pictures, not simply of a uniform complexion, but also of various descriptions and of richest beauty in the abundant mixture of flowers, without let or hindrance.

ARGUMENT II.-HE ESSAYS TO SPEAK OF THE WELL-NIGH DIVINE
ENDOWMENTS OF ORIGEN IN HIS PRESENCE, INTO WHOSE HANDS HE
AVOWS HIMSELF TO HAVE BEEN LED IN A WAY BEYOND ALL HIS
EXPECTATION.

¹ But we, like any of the poor, unfurnished with these varied specifics - whether as never having been possessed of them, or, it may be, as having lost them-are under the necessity of using, as it were, only charcoal and tiles, that is to say, those rude and common words and phrases; and by means of these, to the best of our ability, we represent the native dispositions of our mind, expressing them in such language as is at our service, and endeavouring to exhibit the impressions of the figures of our mind, if not clearly or ornately, yet at least with the faithfulness of a charcoal picture, welcoming gladly any

graceful and eloquent expression which may present itself from any quarter, although we make little of such. But, furthermore, there is a third circumstance which hinders and dissuades me from this attempt, and which holds me back much more even than the others, and recommends me to keep silence by all means,-I allude to the subject itself, which made me indeed ambitious to speak of it, but which now makes me draw back and delay. For it is my purpose to speak of one who has indeed the semblance and repute of being a man, but who seems, to those who are able to contemplate the greatness of his intellectual calibre, to be endowed with powers nobler and well-nigh divine. And it is not his birth or bodily training that I am about to praise, and that makes me now delay and procrastinate with an excess of caution.

²Nor, again, is it his strength or beauty; for these form the eulogies of youths, of which it matters little whether the utterance be worthy or not. For, to make an oration on matters of a temporary and fugitive nature, which perish in many various ways and quickly, and to discourse of these with all the grandeur and dignity of great affairs, and with such timorous delays, would seem a vain and futile procedure. And certainly, if it had been proposed to me to speak of any of those things which are useless and unsubstantial, and such as I should never voluntarily have thought of speaking of,-if, I say, it had been proposed to me to speak of anything of that character, my speech would have had none of this caution or fear, lest in any statement I might seem to come beneath the merit of the subject. But now, my subject dealing with that which is most godlike in the man, and that in him which has most affinity with God, that which is indeed confined within the limits of this visible and mortal form, but which strains nevertheless most ardently after the likeness of God;

³and my object being to make mention of this, and to put my hand to weightier matters, and therein also to express my thanksgivings to the Godhead, in that it has been granted to me to meet with such a man beyond the expectation of men,-the expectation, verily, not only of others, but also of my own heart, for I neither set such a privilege before me at any time, nor hoped for it; it being, I say, my object, insignificant and altogether without understanding as I am, to put my hand to such subjects, it is not without reason that I shrink from the task, and hesitate, and desire to keep silence. And, in truth, to keep silence seems to me to be also the safe course, lest,

with the show of an expression of thanksgiving, I may chance, in my rashness, to discourse of noble and sacred subjects in i terms ignoble and paltry and utterly trite, and thus not only miss attaining the truth, but even, so far as it depends on me, do it some injury with those who may believe that it stands in such a category, when a discourse which is weak is composed thereon, and is rather calculated to excite ridicule than to prove itself commensurate in its vigour with the dignity of its themes. But all that pertains to thee is beyond the touch of injury and ridicule, O dear soul;

4 or, much rather let me say, that the divine herein remains ever as it is, unmoved and harmed in nothing · by our paltry and unworthy words. Yet I know not how we shall escape the imputation of boldness and rashness in thus attempting in our folly, and with little either of intelligence or of preparation, to handle matters which are weighty, and probably beyond our capacity. And if, indeed, elsewhere and with others, we had aspired to make such youthful endeavours in matters like these, we would surely have been bold and daring; nevertheless in such a case our rashness might not have been ascribed to shamelessness, in so far as we should not have been making the bold effort with thee. But now we shall be filling out the whole measure of senselessness, or rather indeed we have already filled it out, in venturing with unwashed feet (as the saying goes) to introduce ourselves to ears into which the Divine Word Himself-not indeed with covered feet, as is the case with the general mass of men, and, as it were, under the thick coverings of enigmatical and obscure sayings, but with unsandalled feet (if one may so speak)-has made His way clearly and perspicuously, and in which He now sojourns; while we, who have but refuse and mud to offer in these human words of ours, have been bold enough to pour them into ears which are practised in hearing only words that are divine and pure. It might indeed suffice us, therefore, to have transgressed thus far;

5 and now, at least, it might be but right to restrain ourselves, and to advance no further, with our discourse. And verily I would stop here most gladly. Nevertheless, as I have once made the rash venture, it may be allowed me first of all to explain the reason under the force of which I have been led into this arduous enterprise, if indeed any pardon can be extended to me for my forwardness in this matter. 6 Argument III.-He is Stimulated to Speak of Him by the Longing of a Grateful Mind. To the Utmost of His Ability He Thinks He Ought to Thank Him. From God are the Beginnings of All Bless-

ings; And to Him Adequate Thanks Cannot Be Returned. ⁷ Ingratitude appears to me to be a dire evil; a dire evil indeed, yea, the direst of evils. For when one has received some benefit, his failing to attempt to make any return by at least the oral expression of thanks, where aught else is beyond his power, marks him out either as an utterly irrational person, or as one devoid of the sense of obligations conferred, or as a man without any memory. And, again, though one is possessed naturally and at once by the sense and the knowledge of benefits received, yet, unless he also carries the memory of these obligations to future days, and offers some evidence of gratitude to the author of the boons, such a person is a dull, and ungrateful, and impious fellow; and he commits an offence which can be excused neither in the case of the great nor in that of the small:-if we suppose the case of a great, and high-minded man not bearing constantly on his lips his great benefits with all gratitude and honour, or that of a small and contemptible man not praising and lauding with all his might one who has been his benefactor, not simply in great services, but also in smaller. Upon the great, therefore, and those who excel in powers of mind, it is incumbent, as out of their greater abundance and larger wealth, to render greater and worthier praise, according to their capacity, to their benefactors.

⁸ But the humble also, and those in narrow circumstances, it beseems neither to neglect those who do them service, nor to take their services carelessly, nor to flag in heart as if they could offer nothing worthy or perfect; but as poor indeed, and yet as of good feeling, and as measuring not the capacity of him whom they honour, but only their own, they ought to pay him honour according to the present measure of their power,-a tribute which will probably be grateful and pleasant to him who is honoured, and in no less consideration with him than it would have been had it been some great and splendid offering, if it is only presented with decided earnestness, and with a sincere mind. Thus is it laid down in the sacred writings, that a certain poor and lowly woman, who was with the rich and powerful that were contributing largely and richly out of their wealth, alone and by herself cast in a small, yea, the very smallest offering, which was, however, all the while her whole substance, and received the testimony of having presented the largest oblation. For, as I judge, the sacred word has not set up the large outward quantity of the substance given, but rather the mind and disposition of

the giver, as the standard by which the worth and the magnificence of the offering are to be measured.

9 Wherefore it is not meet even for us by any means to shrink from this duty, through the fear that our thanksgivings be not adequate to our obligations; but, on the contrary, we ought to venture and attempt everything, so as to offer thanksgivings, if not adequate, at least such as we have it in our power to exhibit, as in due return. And would that our discourse, even though it comes short of the perfect measure, might at least reach the mark in some degree, and be saved from all appearance of ingratitude! For a persistent silence, maintained under the plausible cover of an inability to say anything worthy of the subject, is a vain and evil thing; but it is the mark of a good disposition always to make the attempt at a suitable return, even although the power of the person who offers the grateful acknowledgment be inferior to the desert of the subject. For my part, even although I am unable to speak as the matter merits, I shall not keep silence; but when I have done all that I possibly can, then I may congratulate myself. Be this, then, the method of my eucharistic discourse. To God, indeed, the God of the universe, I shall not think of speaking in such terms: yet is it from Him that all the beginnings of our blessings come; and with Him consequently is it that the beginning of our thanksgivings, or praises, or laudations, ought to be made.

10 But, in truth, not even though i were to devote myself wholly to that duty, and that, too, not as i now am—to wit, profane and impure, and mixed up with and stained by every unhallowed and polluting evil—but sincere and as pure as pure may be, and most genuine, and most unsophisticated, and uncontaminated by anything vile;—not even, I say, though I were thus to devote myself wholly, and with all the purity of the newly born, to this task, should I produce of myself any suitable gift in the way of honour and acknowledgment to the Ruler and Originator of all things, whom neither men separately and individually, nor yet all men in concert, acting with one spirit and one concordant impulse, as though all that is pure were made to meet in one, and all that is diverse from that were turned also to that service, could ever celebrate in a manner worthy of Him. For, in whatsoever measure any man is able to form right and adequate conceptions of His works, and (if such a thing were possible) to speak worthily regarding Him, then, so far as that very capacity is concerned,—a capacity with which he has not been gifted by

any other one, but which he has received from Him alone, he cannot possibly find any greater matter of thanksgiving than what is implied in its possession.

¹¹ Argument IV.—The Son Alone Knows How to Praise the Father Worthily. In Christ and by Christ Our Thanksgiving Sought to Be Rendered to the Father. Gregory Also Gives Thanks to His Guardian Angel, Because He Was Conducted by Him to Origen. ¹² But let us commit the praises and hymns in honour of the King and Superintendent of all things, the perennial Fount of all blessings, to the hand of Him who, in this matter as in all others, is the Healer of our infirmity, and who [alone is able to supply that which is lacking; to the Champion and Saviour of our souls, His first-born Word, the Maker and Ruler of all things, with whom also alone it is possible, both for Himself and for all, whether privately and individually, or publicly and collectively, to send up to the Father uninterrupted and ceaseless thanksgivings. For as He is Himself the Truth, and the Wisdom, and the Power of the Father of the universe, and He is besides in Him, and is truly and entirely made one with Him, it cannot be that, either through forgetfulness or unwisdom, or any manner of infirmity, such as marks one dissociated from Him, He shall either fail in the power to praise Him, or, while having the power, shall willingly neglect (a supposition which it is not lawful, surely, to indulge) to praise the Father. For He alone is able most perfectly to fulfil the whole meed of honour which is proper to Him, inasmuch as the Father of all things has made Him one with Himself, and through Him all but completes the circle of His own being objectively, and honours Him with a power in all respects equal to His own, even as also He is honoured;

¹³ which position He first and alone of all creatures that exist has had assigned Him, this Only-begotten of the Father, who is in Him, and who is God the Word; while all others of us are able to express our thanksgiving and our piety only if, in return for all the blessings which proceed to us from the Father, we bring our offerings in simple dependence on Him alone, and thus present the meet oblation of thanksgiving to Him who is the Author of all things, acknowledging also that the only way of piety is in this manner to offer our memorials through Him. Wherefore, in acknowledgment of that ceaseless providence which watches over all of us, alike in the greatest and in the smallest concerns, and which has been sustained even thus far, let this Word be accepted as the worthy and perpetual expression for all thanksgiv-

ings and praises,-I mean the altogether perfect and living and verily animate Word of the First Mind Himself. But let this word of ours be taken primarily as an eucharistic address in honour of this sacred personage, who stands alone among all men;

¹⁴ and if I may seek to discourse of aught beyond this, and, in particular, of any of those beings who are not seen, but yet are more godlike, and who have a special care for men, it shall be addressed to that being who, by some momentous decision, had me allotted to him from my boyhood to rule, and rear, and train,-I mean that holy angel of God who fed me from my youth, as says the saint dear to God, meaning thereby his own peculiar one. Though he, indeed, as being himself illustrious, did in these terms designate some angel exalted enough to befit his own dignity (and whether it was some other one, or whether it was perchance the Angel of the Mighty Counsel Himself, the Common Saviour of all, that he received as his own peculiar guardian through his perfection, I do not clearly know),-he, I say, did recognise and praise some superior angel as his own, whosoever that was. But we, in addition to the homage we offer to the Common Ruler of all men, acknowledge and praise that being, whosoever he is, who has been the wonderful guide of our childhood, who in all other matters has been in time past my beneficent tutor and guardian. For this office of tutor and guardian is one which evidently can suit neither me nor any of my friends and kindred; for we are all blind, and see nothing of what is before us, so as to be able to judge of what is right and fitting;

¹⁵ but it can suit only him who sees beforehand all that is for the good of our soul: that angel, I say, who still at this present time sustains, and instructs, and conducts me; and who, in addition to all these other benefits, has brought me into connection with this man, which, in truth, is the most important of all the services done me. And this, too, he has effected for me, although between myself and that man of whom I discourse there was no kinship of race or blood, nor any other tie, nor any relationship in neighbourhood or country whatsoever; things which are made the ground of friendship and union among the majority of men. But to speak in brief, in the exercise of a truly divine and wise forethought he brought us together, who were unknown to each other, and strangers, and foreigners, separated as thoroughly from each other as intervening nations, and mountains, and rivers can divide man from man, and thus he made good this meeting which

has been full of profit to me, having, as I judge, provided beforehand this blessing for me from above from my very birth and earliest upbringing. And in what manner this has been realized it would take long to recount fully, not merely if I were to enter minutely into the whole subject, and were to attempt to omit nothing, but even if, passing many things by, I should purpose simply to mention in a summary way a few of the most important points.

¹⁶ Argument V.-Here Gregory Interweaves the Narrative of His Former Life. His Birth of Heathen Parents is Stated. In the Fourteenth Year of His Age He Loses His Father. He is Dedicated to the Study of Eloquence and Law. By a Wonderful Leading of Providence, He is Brought to Origen. ¹⁷ For my earliest upbringing from the time of my birth onwards was under the hand of my parents; and the manner of life in my father's house was one of error, and of a kind from which no one, I imagine, expected that we should be delivered; nor had I myself the hope, boy as I was, and without understanding, and trader a superstitious father. Then followed the loss of my father, and my orphanhood, which perchance was also the beginning of the knowledge of the truth to me. For then it was that I was brought over first to the word of salvation and truth, in what manner I cannot tell, by constraint rather than by voluntary choice. For what power of decision had I then, who was but fourteen years of age? Yet from this very time this sacred Word began somehow to visit me, just at the period when the reason common to all men attained its full function in me; yea, then for the first time did it visit me.

¹⁸ And though I thought but little of this in that olden time, yet now at least, as I ponder it, I consider that no small token of the holy and marvellous providence exercised over me is discernible in this concurrence, which was I so distinctly marked in the matter of my years, and which provided that all those deeds of error which preceded that age might be ascribed to youth and want of understanding, and that the Holy Word might not be imparted vainly to a soul yet ungifted with the full power of reason; and which secured at the same time that when the soul now became endowed with that power, though not gifted with the divine and pure reason, it might not be devoid at least of that fear which is accordant with this reason, but that the human and the divine reason might begin to act in me at once and together,-the one giving help with a power to me at least inexplicable, though proper to itself, and the other receiving help. And when I reflect on this, I am filled at once with gladness and with terror, while I rejoice indeed

in the leading of providence, and yet am also awed by the fear lest, after being privileged with such blessings, I should still in any way fail of the end.

¹⁹ But indeed I know not how my discourse has dwelt so long on this matter, desirous as I am to give an account of the wonderful arrangement (of God's providence) in the course that brought the to this man, and anxious as nevertheless I formerly was to pass with few words to the matters which follow in their order, not certainly imagining that I could render to him who thus dealt with me that tribute of praise, or gratitude, or piety which is due to him (for, were we to designate our discourse in such terms, while yet we said nothing worthy of the theme, we might seem chargeable with arrogance), but simply with the view of offering what may be called a plain narrative or confession, or whatever other humble title may be given it. It seemed good to the only one of my parents who survived to care for me—my mother, namely—that, being already under instruction in those other branches in which boys not ignobly born and nurtured are usually trained, I should attend also a teacher of public speaking, in the hope that I too should become a public speaker. And accordingly I did attend such a teacher; and those who could judge in that department then declared that I should in a short period be a public speaker. I for my own part know not how to pronounce on that, neither should I desire to do so;

²⁰ for there was no apparent ground for that gift then, nor was there as yet any foundation for those forces which were capable of bringing me to it. But that divine conductor and true curator, ever so watchful, when my friends were not thinking of such a step, and when I was not myself desirous of it, came and suggested (an extension of my studies) to one of my teachers under whose charge I had been put, with a view to instruction in the Roman tongue, not in the expectation that I was to reach the completest mastery of that tongue, but only that I might not be absolutely ignorant of it; and this person happened also to be not altogether unversed in laws. Putting the idea, therefore, into this teacher's mind, he set me to learn in a thorough way the laws of the Romans by his help. And that man took up this charge zealously with me; and I, on my side, gave myself to it—more, however, to gratify the man, than as being myself an admirer of the study. And when he got me as his pupil, he began to teach me with all enthusiasm. And he said one thing, which has proved to me the truest of all his sayings, to wit, that my education in the laws would be my greatest viaticum—for thus he phrased it—

whether I aspired to be one of the public speakers who contend in the courts of justice, or preferred to belong to a different order.

²¹ Thus did he express himself, intending his word to bear simply on things human; but to me it seems that he was moved to that utterance by a diviner impulse than he himself supposed. For when, willingly or unwillingly, I was becoming well instructed in these laws, at once bonds, as it were, were cast upon my movements, and cause and occasion for my journeying to these parts arose from the city Berytus, which is a city not far distant from this territory, somewhat Latinized, and credited with being a school for these legal studies. And this revered man coming from Egypt, from the city of Alexandria, where previously he happened to have his home, was moved by other circumstances to change his residence to this place, as if with the express object of meeting us. And for my part, I cannot explain the reasons of these incidents, and I shall willingly pass them by. This however is certain, that as yet no necessary occasion for my coming to this place and meeting with this man was afforded by my purpose to learn our laws, since I had it in my power also to repair to the city of Rome itself. How, then, was this effected? The then governor of Palestine suddenly took possession of a friend of mine, namely my sister's husband, and separated him from his wife, and carried him off here against his will, in order to secure his help, and have him associated with him in the labours of the government of the country;

²² for he was a person skilled in law, and perhaps is still so employed. After he had gone with him, however, he had the good fortune in no long time to have his wife sent for, and to receive her again, from whom, against his will, and to his grievance, he had been separated. And thus he chanced also to draw us along with her to that same place. For when we were minded to travel, I know not where, but certainly to any other place rather than this, a soldier suddenly came upon the scene, bearing a letter of instructions for us to escort and protect our sister in her restoration to her husband, and to offer ourselves also as companion to her on the journey; in which we had the opportunity of doing a favour to our relative, and most of all to our sister (so that she might not have to address herself to the journey either in any unbecoming manner, or with any great fear or hesitation), while at the same time our other friends and connections thought well of it, and made it out to promise no slight advantage, as we could thus visit the city of Berytus, and carry out there with all diligence our studies in the laws.

23 Thus all things moved me thither,-my sense of duty to my sister, my own studies, and over and above these, the soldier (for it is right also to mention this), who had with him a larger supply of public vehicles than the case demanded, and more cheques than could be required for our sister alone. These were the apparent reasons for our journey; but the secret and yet truer reasons were these,-our opportunity of fellowship with this man our instruction through that man's means the truth concerning the Word, and the profit of our soul for its salvation. These were the real causes that brought us here, blind and ignorant, as we were, as to the way of securing our salvation. Wherefore it was not that soldier, but a certain divine companion and beneficent conductor and guardian, ever leading us in safety through the whole of this present life, as through a long journey, that carried us past other places, and Berytus in especial, which city at that time we seemed most bent on reaching, and brought us hither and settled us here, disposing and directing all things, until by any means he might bind us in a connection with this man who was to be the author of the greater part of our blessings.

24 And he who came in such wise, that divine angel, gave over this charge to him, and did, if I may so speak, perchance take his rest here, not indeed under the pressure of labour or exhaustion of any kind (for the generation of those divine ministers knows no weariness), but as having committed us to the hand of a man who would fully discharge the whole work of care and guardianship within his power. 25 Argument VI.-The Arts by Which Origen Studies to Keep Gregory and His Brother Athenodorus with Him, Although It Was Almost Against Their Will; And the Love by Which Both are Taken Captive. Of Philosophy, the Foundation of Piety, with the View of Giving Himself Therefore Wholly to that Study, Gregory is Willing to Give Up Fatherland, Parents, the Pursuit of Law, and Every Other Discipline. Of the Soul as the Free Principle. The Nobler Part Does Not Desire to Be United with the Inferior, But the Inferior with the Nobler.

26 And from the very first day of his receiving us (which day was, in truth, the first day to me, and the most precious of all days, if I may so speak, since then for the first time the true Sun began to rise upon me), while we, like some wild creatures of the fields, or like fish, or some sort of birds that had fallen into the toils or nets, and were endeavouring to slip out again and escape, were bent on leaving him, and making off for Berytus or our native country, he studied by all means to associate us closely with him, contriving

all kinds of arguments, and putting every rope in motion (as the proverb goes), and bringing all his powers to bear on that object. With that intent he lauded the lovers of philosophy with large laudations and many noble utterances, declaring that those only live a life truly worthy of reasonable creatures who aim all living an upright life and who seek to know first of all themselves, what manner of persons they are, and then the things that are truly good, which man ought to strive after, and then the things that are really evil, from which man ought to flee. And then he reprehended ignorance and all the ignorant:

27 and there are many such, who, like brute cattle, are blind in mind, and have no understanding even of what they are, and are as far astray as though they were wholly void of reason, and neither know themselves what is good and what is evil, nor care at all to learn it from others, but toil feverishly in quest of wealth, and glory, and such honours as belong to the crowd, and bodily comforts, and go distraught about things like these, as if they were the real good. And as though such objects were worth much, yea, worth all else, they prize the things themselves, and the arts by which they can acquire them, and the different lines of life which give scope for their attainment,- the military profession, to wit, and the juridical, and the study of the laws. And with earnest and sagacious words he told us that these are the objects that enervate us, when we despise that reason which ought to be the true master within us. I cannot recount at present all the addresses of this kind which he delivered to us, with the view of persuading us to take up the pursuit of philosophy. Nor was it only for a single day that he thus dealt with us, but for many days and, in fact, as often as we were in the habit of going to him at the outset;

28 and we were pierced by his argumentation as with an arrow from the very first occasion of our hearing him (for he was possessed of a rare combination of a certain sweet grace and persuasiveness, along with a strange power of constraint), though we still wavered and debated the matter undecidedly with ourselves, holding so far by the pursuit of philosophy, without however being brought thoroughly over to it, while somehow or other we found ourselves quite unable to withdraw from it conclusively, and thus were always drawn towards him by the power of his reasonings, as by the force of some superior necessity. For he asserted further that there could be no genuine piety towards the Lord of all in the man who despised this gift of philo-

sophy,-a gift which man alone of all the creatures of the earth has been deemed honourable and worthy enough to possess, and one which every man whatsoever, be he wise or be he ignorant, reasonably embraces, who has not utterly lost the power of thought by some mad distraction of mind. He asserted, then, as I have said, that it was not possible (to speak correctly) for any one to be truly pious who did not philosophize.

29 And thus he continued to do with us, until, by pouring in upon us many such argumentations, one after the other, he at last carried us fairly off somehow or other by a kind of divine power, like people with his reasonings, and established us (in the practice of philosophy), and set us down without the power of movement, as it were, beside himself by his arts. Moreover, the stimulus of friendship was also brought to bear upon us,-a stimulus, indeed, not easily withstood, but keen and most effective,-the argument of a kind and affectionate disposition, which showed itself benignantly in his words when he spoke to us and associated with us. For he did not aim merely at getting round us by any kind of reasoning; but his desire was, with a benignant, and affectionate, and most benevolent mind, to save us, and make us partakers in the blessings that flow from philosophy, and most especially also in those other gifts which the Deity has bestowed on him above most men, or, as we may perhaps say, above all men of our own time. I mean the power that teaches us piety, the word of salvation, that comes to many, and subdues to itself all whom it visits: for there is nothing that shall resist it, inasmuch as it is and shall be itself the king of all;

30 although as yet it is hidden, and is not recognised, whether with ease or with difficulty, by the common crowd, in such wise that, when interrogated respecting it, they should be able to speak intelligently about it. And thus, like some spark lighting upon our inmost soul, love was kindled and burst into flame within us,-a love at once to the Holy Word, the most lovely object of all, who attracts all irresistibly toward Himself by His unutterable beauty, and to this man, His friend and advocate. And being most mightily smitten by this love, I was persuaded to give up all those objects or pursuits which seem to us befitting, and among others even my boasted jurisprudence,-yea, my very fatherland and friends, both those who were present with me then, and those from whom I had parted. And in my estimation there arose but one object dear and worth desire,-to wit, philosophy, and that master of philosophy, this inspired man. "And the soul of Jonathan was

knit with David. This word, indeed, I did not read till afterwards in the sacred Scriptures; but I felt it before that time, not less clearly than it is written: for, in truth, it reached me then by the clearest of all revelations. For it was not simply Jonathan that was knit with David;

³¹ but those things were knit together which are the ruling powers in man—their souls,—those objects which, even though all the things which are apparent and ostensible in man are severed, cannot by any skill be forced to a severance when they themselves are unwilling. For the soul is free, and cannot be coerced by any means, not even though one should confine it and keep guard over it in some secret prison-house. For wherever the intelligence is, there it is also of its own nature and by the first reason. And if it seems to you to be in a kind of prison-house, it is represented as there to you by a sort of second reason. But for all that, it is by no means precluded from subsisting anywhere according to its own determination; nay, rather it is both able to be, and is reasonably believed to be, there alone and altogether, wheresoever and in connection with what things soever those actions which are proper only to it are in operation. Wherefore, what I experienced has been most clearly declared in this very short statement, that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David;" objects which, as I said, cannot by any means be forced to a separation against their will, and which of their own inclination certainly will not readily choose it.

³² Nor is it, in my opinion, in the inferior subject, who is changeful and very prone to vary in purpose, and in whom singly there has been no capacity of union at first, that the power of loosing the sacred bonds of this affection rests, but rather in the nobler one, who is constant and not readily shaken, and through whom it has been possible to the these bonds and to fasten this sacred knot. Therefore it is not the soul of David that was knit by the divine word with the soul of Jonathan; but, on the contrary, the soul of the latter, who was the inferior, is said to be thus affected and knit with the soul of David. For the nobler object would not choose to be knit with one inferior, inasmuch as it is sufficient for itself; but the inferior object, as standing in need of the help which the nobler can give, ought properly to be knit with the nobler, and fitted dependently to it: so that this latter, retaining still its sufficiency in itself, might sustain no loss by its connection with the inferior; and that that which is of itself without order being now united and fitted harmoniously with the nobler, might, without any detriment done, be per-

fectly subdued to the nobler by the constraints of such bonds. Wherefore, to apply the bonds is the part of the superior, and not of the inferior;

³³ but to be knit to the other is the part of the inferior, and this too in such a manner that it shall possess no power of loosing itself from these bonds. And by a similar constraint, then, did this David of ours once gird us to himself; and he holds us now, and has held us ever since that time, so that, even though we desired it, we could not loose ourselves from his bonds. And hence it follows that, even though we were to depart, he would not release this soul of mine, which, as the Holy Scripture puts it, he holds knit so closely with himself.

ARGUMENT VII.—THE WONDERFUL SKILL WITH WHICH ORIGEN
PREPARES GREGORY AND ATHENODORUS FOR PHILOSOPHY. THE
INTELLECT OF EACH IS EXERCISED FIRST IN LOGIC, AND THE MERE
ATTENTION TO WORDS IS CONTEMNED.

¹ But after he had thus carried us captive at the very outset, and had shut us in, as it were, on all sides, and when what was best had been accomplished by him, and when it seemed good to us to remain with him for a time, then he took us in hand, as a skilled husbandman may take in hand some field unwrought, and altogether unfertile, and sour, and burnt up, and hard as a rock, and rough, or, it may be, one not utterly barren or unproductive, but rather, perchance, by nature very productive, though then waste and neglected, and stiff and untractable with thorns and wild shrubs; or as a gardener may take in hand some plant which is wild indeed, and which yields no cultivated fruits, though it may not be absolutely worthless, and on finding it thus, may, by his skill in gardening, bring some cultivated shoot and graft it in, by making a fissure in the middle, and then bringing the two together, and binding the one to the other, until the sap in each shall flow in one stream, and they shall both grow with the same nurture: for one may often see a tree of a mixed and worthless species thus rendered productive in spite of its past barrenness, and made to rear the fruits of the good olive on wild roots; or one may see a wild plant saved from being altogether profitless by the skill of a careful gardener;

² or, once more, one may see a plant which otherwise is one both of culture and of fruitfulness, but which, through the want of skilled attendance, has been left unpruned and unwatered and waste, and which is thus choked by the mass of superfluous shoots suffered to grow out of it at random, yet

brought to discharge its proper function in germination, and made to bear the fruit whose production was formerly hindered by the superfluous growth. In suchwise, then, and with such a disposition did he receive us at first; and surveying us, as it were, with a husbandman's skill, and gauging us thoroughly, and not confining his notice to those things only which are patent to the eye of all, and which are looked upon in open light, but penetrating into us more deeply, and probing what is most inward in us, he put us to the question, and made propositions to us, and listened to us in our replies; and whenever he thereby detected anything in us not wholly fruitless and profitless and waste, he set about clearing the soil, and turning it up and irrigating it, and putting all things in movement, and brought his whole skill and care to bear on us, and wrought upon our mind. And thorns and thistles, and every kind of wild herb or plant which our mind (so unregulated and precipitate in its own action) yielded and produced in its uncultured luxuriance and native wildness, he cut out and thoroughly removed by the processes of refutation and prohibition;

³ sometimes assailing us in the genuine Socratic fashion, and again upsetting us by his argumentation whenever he saw us getting restive under him, like so many unbroken steeds, and springing out of the course and galloping madly about at random, until with a strange kind of persuasiveness and constraint he reduced us to a state of quietude under him by his discourse, which acted like a bridle in our mouth. And that was at first an unpleasant position for us, and one not without pain, as he dealt with persons who were unused to it, and still all untrained to submit to reason, when he plied us with his argumentations; and yet he purged us by them. And when he had made us adaptable, and had prepared us successfully for the reception of the words of truth, then, further, as though we were now a soil well wrought and soft, and ready to impart growth to the seeds cast into it, he dealt liberally with us, and sowed the good seed in season, and attended to all the other cares of the good husbandry, each in its own proper season.

⁴ And whenever he perceived any element of infirmity or baseness in our mind (whether it was of that character by nature, or had become thus gross through the excessive nurture of the body), he pricked it with his discourses, and reduced it by those delicate words and turns of reasoning which, although at first the very simplest, are gradually evolved one after the other, and skilfully wrought out, until they advance to a sort of complexity which

can scarce be mastered or unfolded, and which cause us to start up, as it were, out of sleep, and teach us the art of holding always by what is immediately before one, without ever making any slip by reason either of length or of subtlety. And if there was in us anything of an injudicious and precipitate tendency, whether in the way of assenting to all that came across us, of whatever character the objects might be, and even though they proved false, or in the way of often withstanding other things, even though they were spoken truthfully,—that, too, he brought under discipline in us by those delicate reasonings already mentioned, and by others of like kind (for this branch of philosophy is of varied form), and accustomed us not to throw in our testimony at one time, and again to refuse it, just at random, and as chance impelled, but to give it only after careful examination not only into things manifest, but also into those that are secret.

5 For many things which are in high repute of themselves, and honourable in appearance, have found entrance through fair words into our ears, as though they were true, while yet they were hollow and false, and have borne off and taken possession of the suffrage of truth at our hand, and then, no long time afterwards, they have been discovered to be corrupt and unworthy of credit, and deceitful borrowers of the garb of truth; and have thus too easily exposed us as men who are ridiculously deluded, and who bear their witness inconsiderately to things which ought by no means to have won it. And, on the contrary, other things which are really honourable and the reverse of impositions, but which have not been expressed in plausible statements, and thus have the appearance of being paradoxical and most incredible, and which have been rejected as false on their own showing, and held up undeservedly to ridicule, have afterwards, on careful investigation and examination, been discovered to be the truest of all things, and wholly incontestable, though for a time spurned and reckoned false.

6 Not simply, then, by dealing with things patent and prominent, which are sometimes delusive and sophistical, but also by teaching us to search into things within us, and to put them all individually to the test, lest any of them should give back a hollow sound, and by instructing us to make sure of these inward things first of all, he trained us to give our assent to outward things only then and thus, and to express our opinion on all these severally. In this way, that capacity of our mind which deals critically with words and reasonings, was educated in a rational manner; not according to the judg-

ments of illustrious rhetoricians-whatever Greek or foreign honour appertains to that title -for theirs is a discipline of little value and no necessity: but in accordance with that which is most needful for all, whether Greek or outlandish, whether wise or illiterate, and, in fine, not to make a long statement by going over every profession and pursuit separately, in accordance with that which is most indispensable for all men, whatever manner of life they have chosen, if it is indeed the care and interest of all who have to converse on any subject whatever with each other, to be protected against deception.

ARGUMENT VIII.-THEN IN DUE SUCCESSION HE INSTRUCTS THEM IN
PHYSICS, GEOMETRY, AND ASTRONOMY.

¹ Nor did he confine his efforts merely to that form of the mind which it is the lot of the dialectics to regulate; but he also took in hand that humble capacity of mind, (which shows itself) in our amazement at the magnitude, and the wondrousness, and the magnificent and absolutely wise construction of the world, and in our marvelling in a reasonless way, and in our being overpowered with fear, and in our knowing not, like the irrational creatures, what conclusion to come to. That, too, he aroused and corrected by other studies in natural science, illustrating and distinguishing the various divisions of created objects, and with admirable clearness reducing them to their pristine elements, taking them all up perspicuously in his discourse, and going over the nature of the whole, and of each several section, and discussing the multiform revolution and mutation of things in the world, until he carried us frilly along with him under his clear teaching; and by those reasonings which he had partly learned from others, and partly found out for himself, he filled our minds with a rational instead of an irrational wonder at the sacred economy of the universe, and irreproveable constitution of all things. This is that sublime and heavenly study which is taught by natural philosophy-a science most attractive to all. And what need is there now to speak of the sacred mathematics, viz., geometry, so precious to all and above all controversy, and astronomy, whose course is on high?

² These different studies he imprinted on our understandings, training us in them, or calling them into our mind, or doing with us something else which I know not how to designate rightly. And the one he presented lucidly as the immutable groundwork and secure foundation of all, namely geometry; and by the other, namely astronomy, he lifted us up to the things

that are highest above us, while he made heaven passable to us by the help of each of these sciences, as though they were ladders reaching the skies.

ARGUMENT IX.-BUT HE IMBUES THEIR MINDS, ABOVE ALL, WITH
ETHICAL SCIENCE; AND HE DOES NOT CONFINE HIMSELF TO
DISCOURSING ON THE VIRTUES IN WORD, BUT HE RATHER CONFIRMS
HIS TEACHING BY HIS ACTS.

¹ Moreover, as to those things which excel all in importance, and those for the sake of which, above all else, the whole family of the philosophical labours, gathering them like good fruits produced by the varied growths of all the other studies, and of long practised philosophizing,-I mean the divine virtues that concern the moral nature, by which the impulses of the mind have their equable and stable subsistence,-through these, too, he aimed at making us truly proof against grief and disquietude under the pressure of all ills, and at imparting to us a well-disciplined and steadfast and religious spirit, so that we might be in all things veritably blessed. And this he toiled at effecting by pertinent discourses, of a wise and soothing tendency, and very often also by the most cogent addresses touching our moral dispositions, and our modes of life. Nor was it only by words, but also by deeds, that he regulated in some measure our inclinations,-to wit, by that very contemplation and observation of the impulses and affections of the mind, by the issue of which most especially the mind is wont to be reduced to a right estate from one of discord, and to be restored to a condition of judgment and order out of one of confusion. So that, beholding itself as in a mirror (and I may say specifically, viewing, on the one hand, the very beginnings and roots of evil in it, and all that is reasonless within it, from which spring up all absurd affections and passions;

² and, on the other hand, all that is truly excellent and reasonable within it, trader the sway of which it remains proof against injury and perturbation in itself, and then scrutinizing carefully the things thus discovered to be in it), it might cast out all those which are the growth of the inferior part, and which waste our powers through intemperance, or hinder and choke them through depression,-such things as pleasures and lusts, or pains and fears, and the whole array of ills that accompany these different species of evil. I say that thus it might cast them out and make away with them, by coping with them while yet in their beginnings and only just commencing their growth, and not leaving them to wax in strength even by a short delay, but destroy-

ing and rooting them out at once; while, at the same time, it might foster all those things which are really good, and which spring from the nobler part, and might preserve them by nursing them in their beginnings, and watching carefully over them until they should reach their maturity. For it is thus (he used to say) that the heavenly virtues will ripen in the soul: to wit, prudence, which first of all is able to judge of those very motions in the mind at once from the things themselves, and by the knowledge which accrues to it of things outside of us, whatever such there may be, both good and evil;

3 and temperance, the power that makes the right selection among these things in their beginnings; and righteousness, which assigns what is just to each; and that virtue which is the conservator of them all—fortitude. And therefore he did not accustom us to a mere profession in words, as that prudence, for instance, is the knowledge of good and evil, or of what ought to be done, and what ought not: for that would be indeed a vain and profitless study, if there was simply the doctrine without the deed; and worthless would that prudence be, which, without doing the things that ought to be done, and without turning men away from those that ought not to be done, should be able merely to furnish the knowledge of these things to those who possessed her,—though many such persons come under our observation. Nor, again, did he content himself with the mere assertion that temperance is simply the knowledge of what ought to be chosen and what ought not;

4 though the other schools of philosophers do not teach even so much as that, and especially the more recent, who are so forcible and vigorous in words (so that I have often been astonished at them, when they sought to demonstrate that there is the same virtue in God and in men, and that upon earth, in particular, the wise man is equal to God), and yet are incapable of delivering the truth as to prudence, so that one shall do the things which are dictated by prudence, or the truth as to temperance, so that one shall choose the things he has learned by it; and the same holds good also of their treatment of righteousness and fortitude. Not thus, however, in mere words only did this teacher go over the truths concerning the virtues with us; but he incited us much more to the practice of virtue, and stimulated us by the deeds he did more than by the doctrines he taught.

ARGUMENT X.-HENCE THE MERE WORD-SAGES ARE CONFUTED, WHO SAY
AND YET ACT NOT.

¹ Now I beg of the philosophers of this present time, both those whom I have known personally myself, and those of whom I bare heard by report from others, and I beg also of all other men, that they take in good part the statements I have just made. And let no one suppose that I have expressed myself thus, either through simple friendship toward that man, or through hatred toward the rest of the philosophers; for if there is any one inclined to be an admirer of them for their discourses, and wishful to speak well of them, and pleased at hearing the most honourable mention made of them by others, I myself am the man. Nevertheless, those facts (to which I have referred) are of such a nature as to bring upon the very name of philosophy the last degree of ridicule almost from the great mass of men; and I might almost say that I would choose to be altogether unversed in it, rather than learn any of the things which these men profess, with whom I thought it good no longer to associate myself in this life,-though in that, it may be, I formed an incorrect judgment. But I say that no one should suppose that I make these statements at the mere prompting of a zealous regard for the praise of this man, or under the stimulus of any existing animosity towards other philosophers.

² But let all be assured that I say even less than his deeds merit, lest I should seem to be indulging in adulation; and that I do not seek out studied words and phrases, and cunning means of laudation-I who could never of my own will, even when I was a youth, and learning the popular style of address trader a professor of the art of public speaking, bear to utter a word of praise, or pass any encomium on any one which was not genuine. Wherefore on the present occasion, too, I do not think it right, in proposing to myself the task simply of commending him, to magnify him at the cost of the reprobation of others. And, in good sooth, I should speak only to the man's injury, if, with the view of having something grander to say of him, I should compare his blessed life with the failings of others. We are not, however, so senseless. But I shall testify simply to what has come within my own experience, apart from all ill-judged comparisons and trickeries in words.

³ Argument XI.-Origen is the First and the Only One that Exhorts Gregory to Add to His Acquirements the Study of Philosophy, and Offers Him in a Certain Manner an Example in Himself. Of Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude. The Maxim, Know Thyself. ⁴He was also the

first and only man that urged me to study the philosophy of the Greeks, and persuaded me by his own moral example both to hear and to hold by the doctrine of morals, while as yet I had by no means been won over to that, so far as other philosophers were concerned (I again acknowledge it),-not rightly so, indeed, but unhappily, as I may say without exaggeration, for me. I did not, however, associate with many at first, but only with some few who professed to be teachers, though, in good sooth, they all established their philosophy only so far as words went. This man, however, was the first that induced me to philosophize by his words, as he pointed the exhortation by deeds before he gave it in words, and did not merely recite well-studied sentences; nay, he did not deem it right to speak on the subject at all, but with a sincere mind, and one bent on striving ardently after the practical accomplishment of the things expressed, and he endeavoured all the while to show himself in character like the man whom he describes in his discourses as the person who shall lead a noble life, and he ever exhibited (in himself), I would say, the pattern of the wise man. But as our discourse at the outset proposed to deal with the truth, and not with vain-glorious language, I shall not speak of him now as the exemplar of the wise man.

5 And yet, if I chose to speak thus of him, I should not be far astray from the truth. Nevertheless, I pass that by at present. I shall not speak of him as a perfect pattern, but as one who vehemently desires to imitate the perfect pattern, and strives after it with zeal and earnestness, even beyond the capacity of men, if I may so express myself; and who labours, moreover, also to make us, who are so different, of like character with himself, not mere masters and apprehenders of the bald doctrines concerning the impulses of the soul, but masters and apprehenders of these impulses themselves. For he pressed us on both to deed and to doctrine, and carried us along by that same view and method, not merely into a small section of each virtue, but rather into the whole, if mayhap we were able to take it in. And he constrained us also, if I may so speak, to practise righteousness on the ground of the personal action of the soul itself, which he persuaded us to study, drawing us off from the officious anxieties of life, and from the turbulence of the forum, and raising us to the nobler vocation of looking into ourselves, and dealing with the things that concern ourselves in truth.

6 Now, that this is to practise righteousness, and that this is the true righteousness, some also of our ancient philosophers have asserted (express-

ing it as the personal action, I think), and have affirmed that this is more profitable for blessedness, both to the men themselves and to those who are with them, if indeed it belongs to this virtue to recompense according to desert, and to assign to each his own. For what else could be supposed to be so proper to the soul? Or what could be so worthy of it, as to exercise a care over itself, not gazing outwards, or busying itself with alien matters, or, to peak shortly, doing the worst injustice to itself, but turning its attention inwardly upon itself, rendering its own due to itself, and acting thereby righteously? To practise righteousness after this fashion, therefore, he impressed upon us, if I may so speak, by a sort of force. And he educated us to prudence none the less,—teaching to be at home with ourselves, and to desire and endeavour to know ourselves, which indeed is the most excellent achievement of philosophy, the thing that is ascribed also to the most prophetic of spirits as the highest argument of wisdom—the precept, Know thyself. And that this is the genuine function of prudence, and that such is the heavenly prudence, is affirmed well by the ancients; for in this there is one virtue common to God and to man;

7 while the soul is exercised in beholding itself as in a mirror, and reflects the divine mind in itself, if it is worthy of such a relation, and traces out a certain inexpressible method for the attaining of a kind of apotheosis. And in correspondence with this come also the virtues of temperance. and fortitude: temperance, indeed, in conserving this very prudence which must be in the soul that knows itself, if that is ever its lot (for this temperance, again, surely means just a sound prudence): and fortitude, in keeping stedfastly by all the duties which have been spoken of, without falling away from them, either voluntarily or under any force, and in keeping and holding by all that has been laid down. For he teaches that this virtue acts also as a kind of preserver, maintainer, and guardian.

ARGUMENT XII.—GREGORY DISALLOWS ANY ATTAINMENT OF THE
VIRTUES ON HIS PART. PIETY IS BOTH THE BEGINNING AND THE END,
AND THUS IT IS THE PARENT OF ALL THE VIRTUES.

1 It is true, indeed that in consequence of our dull and sluggish nature, he has not yet succeeded in making us righteous, and prudent, and temperate, or manly, although he has laboured zealously on us. For we are neither in real possession of any virtue whatsoever, either human or divine, nor have we ever made any near approach to it, but we are still far from it. And these are

very great and lofty virtues, and none of them may be assumed by any common person, but only by one whom God inspires with the power. We are also by no means so favourably constituted for them by nature, neither do we yet profess ourselves to be worthy of reaching them; for through our listlessness and feebleness we have not done all these things which ought to be done by those who aspire after what is noblest, and aim at what is perfect. We are not yet therefore either righteous or temperate, or endowed with any of the other virtues. But this admirable man, this friend and advocate of the virtues, has long ago done for us perhaps all that it lay in his power to do for us, in making us lovers of virtue, who should love it with the most ardent affection. And by his own virtue he created in us a love at once for the beauty of righteousness the golden face of which in truth was shown to us by him; and for prudence, which is worthy of being sought by all;

2 and for the true wisdom, which is most delectable; and for temperance, the heavenly virtue which forms the sound constitution of the soul, and brings peace to all who possess it; and for manliness, that most admirable grace; and for patience, that virtue peculiarly ours; and, above all, for piety, which men rightly designate when they call it the mother of the virtues. For this is the beginning and the end of all the virtues. And beginning with this one, we shall find all the other virtues grow upon us most readily: if, while for ourselves we earnestly aspire after this grace, which every man, be he only not absolutely impious, or a mere pleasure-seeker, ought to acquire for himself, in order to his being a friend of God and a maintainer of His truth, and while we diligently pursue this virtue, we also give heed to the other virtues, in order that we may not approach our God in unworthiness and impurity, but with all virtue and wisdom as our best conductors and most sagacious priests. And the end of all I consider to be nothing but this: By the pure mind make thyself like to God, that thou mayest draw near to Him, and abide in Him.

ARGUMENT XIII.—THE METHOD WHICH ORIGEN USED IN HIS THEOLOGICAL AND METAPHYSICAL INSTRUCTIONS. HE COMMENDS THE STUDY OF ALL WRITERS, THE ATHEISTIC ALONE EXCEPTED. THE MARVELLOUS POWER OF PERSUASION IN SPEECH. THE FACILITY OF THE MIND IN GIVING ITS ASSENT.

1 And besides all his other patient and laborious efforts, how shall I in words give any account of what he did for us, in instructing us in theology and the devout character? and how shall I enter into the real disposition of the man,

and show with what judiciousness and careful preparation he would have us familiarized with all discourse about the Divinity, guarding sedulously against our being in any peril with respect to what is the most needful thing of all, namely, the knowledge of the Cause of all things? For he deemed it right for us to study philosophy in such wise. that we should read with utmost diligence all that has been written, both by the philosophers and by the poets of old, rejecting nothing, and repudiating nothing (for, indeed, we did not yet possess the power of critical discernment), except only the productions of the atheists, who, in their conceits, lapse from the general intelligence of man, and deny that there is either a God or a providence. From these he would have us abstain, because they are not worthy of being read, and because it might chance that the soul within us that is meant for piety might be defiled by listening to words that are contrary to the worship of God. For even those who frequent the temples of piety, as they think them to be, are careful not to touch anything that is profane.

²He held, therefore, that the books of such men did not merit to be taken at all into the consideration of men who have assumed the practice of piety. He thought, however, that we should obtain and make ourselves familiar with all other writings, neither preferring nor repudiating any one kind, whether it be philosophical discourse or not, whether Greek or foreign, but hearing what all of them have to convey. And it was with great wisdom and sagacity that he acted on this principle, test any single saying given by the one class or the other should be heard and valued above others as alone true, even though it might not be true, and test it might thus enter our mind and deceive us, and, in being lodged there by itself alone, might make us its own, so that we should no more have the power to withdraw from it, or wash ourselves clear of it, as one washes out a little wool that has got some colour ingrained in it. For a mighty thing and an energetic is the discourse of man, and subtle with its sophisms, and quick to find its way into the ears, and mould the mind, and impress us with what it conveys; and when once it has taken possession of us, it can win us over to love it as truth; and it holds its place within us even though it be false and deceitful, overmastering us like some enchanter, and retaining as its champion the very man it has deluded.

³And, on the other hand, the mind of man is withal a thing easily deceived by speech, and very facile in yielding its assent; and, indeed, before it

discriminates and inquires into matters in any proper way, it is easily won over, either through its own obtuseness and imbecility, or through the subtlety of the discourse, to give itself up, at random often, all weary of accurate examination, to crafty reasonings and judgments, which are erroneous themselves, and which lead into error those who receive them. And not only so; but if another mode of discourse aims at correcting it, it will neither give it admittance, nor stiffer itself to be altered in opinion, because it is held fast by any notion which has previously got possession of it, as though some inexorable tyrant were lording over it. ⁴ Argument XIV.-Whence the Contentions of Philosophers Have Sprung. Against Those Who Catch at Everything that Meets Them, and Give It Credence, and Cling to It. Origen Was in the Habit of Carefully Reading and Explaining the Books of the Heathen to His Disciples.

⁵ Is it not thus that contradictory and opposing tenets have been introduced, and all the contentions of philosophers, while one party withstands the opinions of another, and some hold by certain positions, and others by others, and one school attaches itself to one set of dogmas, and another to another? And all, indeed, aim at philosophizing, and profess to have been doing so ever since they were first roused to it, and declare that they desire it not less now when they are well versed in the discussions than when they began them: yea, rather they allege that they have even more love for philosophy now, after they have had, so to speak, a little taste of it, and have had the liberty of dwelling on its discussions, than when at first, and without any previous experience of it, they were urged by a sort of impulse to philosophize. That is what they say; and henceforth they give no heed to any words of those who hold opposite opinions. And accordingly, no one of the ancients has ever induced any one of the moderns, or those of the Peripatetic school, to turn to his way of thinking, and adopt his method of philosophizing; and, on the other band, none of the moderns has imposed his notions upon those of the ancient school. Nor, in short, has any one done so with any other. For it is not an easy thing to induce one to give up his own opinions, and accept those of others;

⁶ although these might, perhaps, even be sentiments which, if he had been led to credit them before he began to philosophize, the man might at first have admired and accepted with all readiness: as, while the mind was not yet preoccupied, he might have directed his attention to that set of opinions,

and given them his approval, and on their behalf opposed himself to those which he holds at present. Such, at least, has been the kind of philosophizing exhibited by our noble and most eloquent and critical Greeks: for whatever any one of these has lighted on at the outset, moved by some impulse or other, that alone he declares to be truth, and holds that all else which is maintained by other philosophers is simply delusion and folly, though he himself does not more satisfactorily establish his own positions by argument, than do all the others severally defend their peculiar tenets; the man's object being simply to be under no obligation to give up and alter his opinions, whether by constraint or by persuasion, while he has (if one may speak truth) nothing else but a kind of unreasoning impulse towards these dogmas on the side of philosophy, and possesses no other criterion of what he imagines to be true, than (let it not seem an incredible assertion) undistinguishing chance.

7 And as each one thus becomes attached to those positions with which he has first fallen in, and is, as it were, held in chains by them, he is no longer capable of giving attention to others, if he happens to have anything of his own to offer on every subject with the demonstration of truth, and if he has the aid of argument to show how false the tenets of his adversaries are; for, helplessly and thoughtlessly and as if he looked for some happy contingency, he yields himself to the reasonings that first take possession of him. And such reasonings mislead those who accept them, not only in other matters, but above all, in what is of greatest and most essential consequence—in the knowledge of God and in piety. And yet men become bound by them in such a manner that no one can very easily release them. For they are like men caught in a swamp stretching over some wide impassable plain, which, when they have once fallen into it, allows them neither to retrace their steps nor to cross it and effect their safety, but keeps them down in its soil until they meet their end; or they may be compared to men in a deep, dense, and majestic forest, into which the wayfarer enters, with the idea, perchance, of finding his road out of it again forthwith, and of taking his course once more on the open plain, but is baffled in his purpose by the extent and thickness of the wood.

8 And turning in a variety of directions, and lighting on various continuous paths within it, he pursues many a course, thinking that by some of them he will surely find his way out: but they only lead him farther in, and in no way open up an exit for him, inasmuch as they are all only paths within the

forest itself; until at last the traveller, utterly worn out and exhausted, seeing that all the ways he had tried had proved only forest still, and despairing of finding any more his dwelling-place on earth, makes up his mind to abide there, and establish his hearth, and lay out for his use such free space as he can prepare in the wood itself. Or again, we might take the similitude of a labyrinth, which has but one apparent entrance, so that one suspects nothing artful from the outside, and goes within by the single door that shows itself; and then, after advancing to the farthest interior, and viewing the cunning spectacle, and examining the construction so skillfully contrived, and full of passages, and laid out with unending paths leading inwards or outwards, he decides to go out again, but finds himself unable, and sees his exit completely intercepted by that inner construction which appeared such a triumph of cleverness.

9 But, after all, there is neither any labyrinth so inextricable and intricate, nor any forest so dense and devious, nor any plain or swamp so difficult for those to get out of, who have once got within it, as is discussion, at least as one may meet with it in the case of certain of these philosophers. Wherefore, to secure us against falling into the unhappy experience of most, he did not introduce us to any one exclusive school of philosophy; nor did he judge it proper for us to go away with any single class of philosophical opinions, but he introduced us to all, and determined that we should be ignorant of no kind of Grecian doctrine. And he himself went on with us, preparing the way before us, and leading us by the hand, as on a journey, whenever anything tortuous and unsound and delusive came in our way. And he helped us like a skilled expert who has had long familiarity with such subjects, and is not strange or inexperienced in anything of the kind, and who therefore may remain safe in his own altitude, while he stretches forth his hand to others, and effects their security too, as one drawing up the submerged. Thus did he deal with us, selecting and setting before us all that was useful and true in all the various philosophers, and putting aside all that was false. And this he did for us, both in other branches of man's knowledge, and most especially in all that concerns piety.

ARGUMENT XV.-FILE CASE OF DIVINE MATTERS. ONLY GOD AND HIS
PROPHETS ARE TO BE HEARD IN THESE. THE PROPHETS AND THEIR
AUDITORS ARE ACTED ON BY THE SAME AFFLATUS. ORIGEN'S
EXCELLENCE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

¹ With respect to these human teachers, indeed, he counselled us to attach ourselves to none of them, not even though they were attested as most wise by all men, but to devote ourselves to God alone, and to the prophets. And he himself became the interpreter of the prophets to us, and explained whatsoever was dark or enigmatical in them. For there are many things of that kind in the sacred words; and whether it be that God is pleased to hold communication with men in such a way as that the divine word may not enter all naked and uncovered into an unworthy soul, such as many are, or whether it be, that while every divine oracle is in its own nature most clear and perspicuous, it seems obscure and dark to us, who have apostatized from God, and have lost the faculty of hearing through time and age, I cannot tell. But however the case may stand, if it be that there are some words really enigmatical, he explained all such, and set them in the light, as being himself a skilled and most discerning hearer of God;

² or if it be that none of them are really obscure in their own nature, they were also not unintelligible to him, who alone of all men of the present time with whom I have myself been acquainted, or of whom I have heard by the report of others, has so deeply studied the clear and luminous oracles of God, as to be able at once to receive their meaning into his own mind, and to convey it to others. For that Leader of all men, who inspires God's dear prophets, and suggests all their prophecies and their mystic and heavenly words, has honoured this man as He would a friend, and has constituted him an expositor of these same oracles; and things of which He only gave a hint by others, He made matters of full instruction by this man's instrumentality; and in things which He, who is worthy of all trust, either enjoined in regal fashion, or simply enunciated, He imparted to this man the gift of investigating and unfolding and explaining them: so that, if there chanced to be any one of obtuse and incredulous mind, or one again thirsting for instruction, he might learn from this man, and in some manner be constrained to understand and to decide for belief, and to follow God. These things, moreover, as I judge, he gives forth only and truly by participation in the Di-

vine Spirit: for there is need of the same power for or those who prophesy and for those who hear the prophets;

³ and no one can rightly hear a prophet, unless the same Spirit who prophesies bestows on him the capacity of apprehending His words. And this principle is expressed indeed in the Holy Scriptures themselves, when it is said that only He who shutteth openeth, and no other one whatever; and what is shut is opened when the word of inspiration explains mysteries. Now that greatest gift this man has received from God, and that noblest of all endowments he has had bestowed upon him from heaven, that he should be an interpreter of the oracles of God to men, and that he might understand the words of God, even as if God spake them to him, and that he might recount them to men in such wise as that they may hear them with intelligence. Therefore to us there was no forbidden subject of speech; for there was no matter of knowledge hidden or inaccessible to us, but we had it in our power to learn every kind of discourse, both foreign and Greek, both spiritual and political, both divine and human; and we were permitted with all freedom to go round the whole circle of knowledge, and investigate it, and satisfy ourselves with all kinds of doctrines, and enjoy the sweets of intellect. And whether it was some ancient system of truth, or whether it was something one might otherwise name that was before us, we had in him an apparatus and a power at once admirable and full of the most beautiful views.

⁴ And to speak in brief, he was truly a paradise to us after the similitude of the paradise of God, wherein we were not set indeed to till the soil beneath us, or to make ourselves gross with bodily nurture, but only to increase the acquisitions of mind with all gladness and enjoyment,—planting, so to speak, some fair growths ourselves, or having them planted in us by the Author of all things.

ARGUMENT XVI.—GREGORY LAMENTS HIS DEPARTURE UNDER A
THREEFOLD COMPARISON; LIKENING IT TO ADAM'S DEPARTURE OUT
OF PARADISE. TO THE PRODIGAL SON'S ABANDONMENT OF HIS
FATHER'S HOUSE, AND TO THE DEPORTATION OF THE JEWS INTO
BABYLON.

¹ Here, truly, is the paradise of comfort; here are true gladness and pleasure, as we have enjoyed them during this period which is now at its end—no short space indeed in itself, and yet all too short if this is really to be its conclusion, when we depart and leave this place behind us. For I know not what has possessed me, or what offence has been committed by me, that I should now be

going away-that I should now be put away. I know not what I should say, unless it be that I am like a second Adam and have begun to talk, outside of paradise. How excellent might my life be, were I but a listener to the addresses of my teacher, and silent myself! Would that even now I could have learned to be mute and speechless, rather than to present this new spectacle of making the teacher the hearer! For what concern had I with such a harangue as this? and what obligation was there upon me to make such an address, when it became me not to depart, but to cleave fast to the place? But these things seem like the transgressions that sprung from the pristine deceit, and the penalties of these primeval offences still await me here. Do I not appear to myself to be disobedient in daring thus to overpass the words of God, when I ought to abide in them, and hold by them?

² And in that I withdraw, I flee from this blessed life, even as the primeval man fled from the face of God, and I return to the soil from which I was taken. Therefore shall I have to eat of the soil all the days of my life there, and I shall have to till the soil-the very soil which produces thorns and thistles for me, that is to say, pains and reproachful anxieties-set loose as I shall be from cares that are good and noble. And what I left behind me before, to that I now return-to the soil, as it were, from which I came, and to my common relationships here below, and to my father's house-leaving the good soil, where of old I knew not that the good fatherland lay; leaving also the relations in whom at a later period I began to recognise the true kinsmen of my soul, and the house, too, of him who is ill truth our father, in which the father abides, and is piously honoured and revered by the genuine sons, whose desire it also is to abide therein. But I, destitute alike of all piety and worthiness, am going forth from the number of these, and am turning back to what is behind, and am retracing my steps. It is recorded that a certain son, receiving from his father tile portion of goods that fell to him proportionately with the other heir, his brother, departed, by his own determination, into a strange country far distant from his father;

³ and, living there in riot, he scattered his ancestral substance, and utterly wasted it; and at last, under the pressure of want, he hired himself as a swineherd; and being driven to extremity by hunger, he longed to share the food given to the swine, but could not touch it. Thus did he pay the penalty of his dissolute life, when he had to exchange his father's table, which was a princely one, for something he had not looked forward to-the sustenance of

swine and serfs. And we also seem to have some such fortune before us, now that we are departing, and that, too, without the full portion that falls to us. For though we have not received all that we ought, we are nevertheless going away, leaving behind us what is noble and dear with you and beside you, and taking in exchange only what is inferior. For all things melancholy will now meet us in succession,—tumult and confusion instead of peace, and an unregulated life instead of one of tranquillity and harmony, and a hard bondage, and the slavery of market-places, and lawsuits, and crowds, instead of this freedom; and neither pleasure nor any sort of leisure shall remain to us for the pursuit of nobler objects.

4 Neither shall we have to speak of the words of inspiration, but we shall have to speak of the works of men,—a thing which has been deemed simply a bane by the prophet, —and in our case, indeed, those of wicked men. And truly we shall have night in place of clay, and darkness in place of the clear light, and grief instead of the festive assembly; and in place of a fatherland, a hostile country will receive us, in which I shall have no liberty to sing my sacred song, for how could I sing it in a land strange to my soul, in which the sojourners have no permission to approach God? but only to weep and mourn, as I call to mind the different state of things here, if indeed even that shall be in my power. We read that enemies once assailed a great and sacred city, in which the worship of God was observed, and dragged away its inhabitants, both singers and prophets, into their own country, which was Babylon. And it is narrated that these captives, when they were detained in the land, refused, even when asked by their conquerors, to sing the divine song, or to play in a profane country, and hung their harps on the willow-trees, and wept by the rivers of Babylon.

5 Like one of these I verily seem to myself to be, as I am cast forth from this city, and from this sacred fatherland of mine, where both by day and by night the holy laws are declared, and hymns and songs and spiritual words are heard; where also there is perpetual sunlight; where by day in waking vision we have access to the mysteries of God, and by night in dreams we are still occupied with what the soul has seen and handled in the day; and where, in short, the inspiration of divine things prevails over all continually. From this city, I say, I am cast forth, and borne captive to a strange land, where I shall have no power to pipe: for, like these men of old, I shall have to hang my instrument on the willows, and the rivers shall be my place of sojourn,

and I shall have to work in mud, and shall have no heart to sing hymns, even though I remember them; yea, it may be that, through constant occupation with other subjects, I shall forget even them, like one spoiled of memory itself. And would that, in going away, I only went away against my will, as a captive is wont to do; but I go away also of my own will, and not by constraint of another; and by my own act I am dispossessed of this city, when it is in my option to remain in it.

Perchance, too, in leaving this place, I may be going to prosecute no safe journey, as it sometimes fares with one who quits some safe and peaceful city; and it is indeed but too likely that, in journeying, I may fall into the hands of robbers, and be taken prisoner, and be stripped and wounded with many strokes, and be cast forth to lie half-dead somewhere.

ARGUMENT XVII.-GREGORY CONSOLES HIMSELF.

But why should I utter such lamentations? There lives still the Saviour of all men, even of the half-dead and the despoiled, the Protector and Physician for all, the Word, that sleepless Keeper of all. We have also seeds of truth which thou hast made us know as our possession, and all that we have received from thee,—those noble deposits of instruction, with which we take our coarse; and though we weep, indeed, as those who go forth from home, we yet carry those seeds with us. It may be, then, that the Keeper who presides over us will bear us in safety through all that shall befall us; and it may be that we shall come yet again to thee, bringing with us the fruits and hand-fuls yielded by these seeds, far from perfect truly, for how could they be so? but still such as a life spent in civil business makes it possible for us to rear, though marred indeed by a kind of faculty that is either unapt to bear fruit altogether, or prone to bear bad fruit, but which, I trust, is one not destined to be further misused by us, if God grants us grace.

ARGUMENT XVIII.-PERORATION, AND APOLOGY FOR THE ORATION.

Wherefore let me now have done with this address, which I have had the boldness to deliver in a presence wherein boldness least became me. Yet this address is one which, I think, has aimed heartily at signifying our thanks to the best of our ability,—for though we have had nothing to say worthy of the subject, we could not be altogether silent,—and one, too, which has given expression to our regrets, as those are wont to do who go abroad in separation from friends. And whether this speech of mine may not have contained

things puerile or bordering on flattery, or things offending by excess of simplicity on the one hand, or of elaboration on the other, I know not. Of this, however, I am clearly conscious, that at least there is in it nothing unreal, but all that is true and genuine, in sincerity of opinion, and in purity and integrity of judgment.

ARGUMENT XIX.-APOSTROPHE TO ORIGEN, AND THEREWITH THE
LEAVE-TAKING, AND THE URGENT UTTERANCE OF PRAYER.

But, O dear soul, arise thou and offer prayer, and now dismiss us; and as by thy holy instructions thou hast been our rescuer when we enjoyed thy fellowship, so save us still by thy prayers in our separation. Commend us and set us constantly before thee in prayer. Or rather commend us continually to that God who brought us to time, giving thanks for all that has been granted us in the past, and imploring Him still to lead us by the hand in the future, and to stand ever by us, filling our mind with the understanding of His precepts, inspiring us with the godly fear of Himself, and vouchsafing us henceforward His choicest guidance. For when we are gone from thee, we shall not have the same liberty for obeying Him as was ours when we were with thee. Pray, therefore, that some encouragement may be conveyed to us from Him when we lose thy presence, and that He may send us a good conductor, some angel to be our comrade on the way, And entreat Him also to turn our course, for that is the one thing which above all else will effectually comfort us, and bring us back to thee again.

Theognostus: Outlines (Hypotypeses)

THEOGNOSTUS OF ALEXANDRIA

fl. c. AD 270

Head of the catechetical school at Alexandria.

I.

The substance of the Son is not a substance devised extraneously, nor is it one introduced out of nothing; but it was born of the substance of the Father, as the reflection of light or as the steam of water. For the reflection is not the sun itself, and the steam is not the water itself, nor yet again is it anything alien; neither is He Himself the Father, nor is He alien, but He is an emanation from the substance of the Father, this substance of the Father suffering the while no partition. For as the sun remains the same and suffers no diminution from the rays that are poured out by it, so neither did the substance of the Father undergo any change in having the Son as an image of itself.

II.

Theognostus, moreover, himself adds words to this effect: He who has offended against the first term and the second, may be judged to deserve smaller punishment; but he who has also despised the third, can no longer find pardon. For by the first term and the second, he says, is meant the teaching concerning the Father and the Son; but by the third is meant the doctrine committed to us with respect to the perfection and the partaking of the Spirit. And with the view of confirming this, he adduces the word spoken by the Saviour to the disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. But when the Holy Spirit is come, He will teach you."

III.

Then he says again: As the Saviour converses with those not yet able to receive what is perfect, condescending to their littleness, while the Holy Spirit communes with the perfected, and yet we could never say on that account

that the teaching of the Spirit is superior to the teaching of the Son, but only that the Son condescends to the imperfect, while the Spirit is the seal of the perfected; even so it is not on account of the superiority of the Spirit over the Son that the blasphemy against the Spirit is a sin excluding impunity and pardon, but because for the imperfect there is pardon, while for those who have tasted the heavenly gift, and been made perfect, there remains no plea or prayer for pardon.

Pierus of Alexandria

WRITINGS AND FRAGMENTS

d. c. AD 310

Presbyter and teacher at Alexandria, called the younger Origen.

TRANSLATOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Pierus of Alexandria. Translator's Biographical Notice. [a.d. 275.] Among the very eminent men who flourished near his own time, Eusebius mentions Pierius, a presbyter of Alexandria, and speaks of him as greatly renowned for his voluntary poverty, his philosophical erudition and his skill in the exposition of Scripture and in discoursing to the public assemblies of the Church. He lived in the latter part of the third century, and seems to have been for a considerable period president of the Catechetical school at Alexandria. Jerome says that he was called Origenes, junior; and according to Photius, he shared in some of the errors of Origen, on such subjects especially as the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and the pre-existence of souls. In his manner of life he was an ascetic. After the persecution under Galerius or Maximus he lived at Rome. He appears to have devoted himself largely to sacred criticism and the study of the text of Scripture; and among several treatises written by him, and extant in the time of Photius, we find mention made of one on the prophet Hosea. And, in addition to the Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Photius notices twelve books of his, and praises both their composition and their matter.

A FRAGMENT OF A WORK OF PIERIUS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

I.—A Fragment of a Work of Pierius on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. Origen, Dionysius, Pierius, Eusebius of Cæsareia, Didymus, and Apollinaris, have interpreted this epistle most copiously; of whom Pierius, when he was expounding and unfolding the meaning of the apostle, and purposed to explain the words, For I would that all men were even as I my-

self, added this remark: In saying this, Paul, without disguise, preaches celibacy.

A SECTION ON THE WRITINGS OF PIERIUS

¹ II.—A Section on the Writings of Pierius. Different Discourses of the Presbyter Pierius. ² There was read a book by Pierius the presbyter, who, they say, endured the conflict for Christ, along with his brother Isidorus. And he is reputed to have been the teacher of the martyr Pamphilus in ecclesiastical studies, and to have been president of the school at Alexandria. The work contained twelve books. And in style he is perspicuous and clear, with the easy flow, as it were, of a spoken address, displaying no signs of laboured art, but bearing us quietly along, smoothly and gently, like off-hand speaking. And in argument he is most fertile, if any one is so. And he expresses his opinion on many things outside what is now established in the Church, perhaps in an antique manner; but with respect to the Father and the Son, he sets forth his sentiments piously, except that he speaks of two substances and two natures; using, however, the terms substance and nature, as is apparent from what follows, and from what precedes this passage, in the sense of person and not in the sense put on it by the adherents of Arius. With respect to the Spirit, however, he lays down his opinion in a very dangerous and far from pious manner. For he affirms that He is inferior to the Father and the Son in glory. He has a passage also in the book entitled, *On the Gospel according to Luke*, from which it is possible to show that the honour or dishonour of the image is also the honour or dishonour of the original.

³ And, again, he indulges in some obscure speculations, after the manner of the nonsense of Origen, on the subject of the “pre-existence of souls. And also in the book on the Passover (Easter) and on Hosea, he treats both of the cherubim made by Moses, and of the pillar of Jacob, in which passages he admits the actual construction of those things, but propounds the foolish theory that they were given economically, and that they were in no respect like other things which are made; inasmuch as they bore the likeness of no other form, but had only, as he foolishly says, the appearance of wings.

The Epistle of Theonas to Lucianus

THEONAS OF ALEXANDRIA

d. c. AD 300

Bishop of Alexandria.

INTRODUCTION

Bishop Theonas to Lucianus, the Chief Chamberlain of Our Most Invincible Emperor.

I.

¹ I give thanks to Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ, who has not given over the manifesting of His faith throughout the whole world, as the sole specific for our salvation, and the extending of it even in the course of the persecutions of despots. Yea, like gold reduced in the furnace, it has only been made to shine the more under the storms of persecution, and its truth and grandeur have only become always the more and more illustrious, so that now, peace being granted to the churches by our gracious prince, the works of Christians are shining even in sight of the unbelieving, and God your Father, who is in heaven, is glorified thereby; a thing which, if we desire to be Christians in deed rather than in word, we ought to seek and aspire after as our first object on account of our salvation. For if we seek our own glory, we set our desire upon a vain and perishing object, and one which leads ourselves on to death. But the glory of the Father and of the Son, who for our salvation was nailed to the cross, makes us safe for the everlasting redemption; and that is the greatest hope of Christians.

² Wherefore, my Lucianus, I neither suppose nor desire that you should make it a matter of boasting, that by your means many persons belonging to the palace of the emperor have been brought to the knowledge of the truth; but rather does it become us to give the thanks to our God who has made thee a good instrument for a good work, and has raised thee to great honour with the emperor, that you might diffuse the sweet savour of the Christian

name to His own glory and to the salvation of many. For just the more completely that the emperor himself, though not yet attached to the Christian religion, has entrusted the care of his life and person to these same Christians as his more faithful servants, so much the more careful ought ye to be, and the more diligent and watchful in seeing to his safety and in attending upon him, so that the name of Christ may be greatly glorified thereby, and His faith extended daily through you who wait upon the emperor. For in old times some former princes thought us malevolent and filled with all manner of crime; but now, seeing your good works, they should not be able to avoid glorifying Christ Himself.

II.

¹ Therefore you ought to strive to the utmost of your power not to fall into a base or dishonourable, not to say an absolutely flagitious way of thinking, lest the name of Christ be thus blasphemed even by you. Be it far from you that you should sell the privilege of access to the emperor to any one for money, or that you should by any means place a dishonest account of any affair before your prince, won over either by prayers or by bribes. Let all the lust of avarice be put from you, which serves the cause of idolatry rather than the religion of Christ. No filthy lucre, no duplicity, can befit the Christian who embraces the simple and unadorned Christ. Let no scurrilous or base talk have place among you. Let all things be done with modesty, courteousness, affability, and uprightness, so that the name of our God and Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in all.

² Discharge the official duties to which you are severally appointed with the utmost fear of God and affection to your prince, and perfect carefulness. Consider that every command of the emperor which does not offend God has proceeded from God Himself; and execute it in love as well as in fear, and with all cheerfulness. For there is nothing which so well refreshes a man who is wearied out with weighty cares as the seasonable cheerfulness and benign patience of an intimate servant; nor, again, on the other hand, does anything so much annoy and vex him as the moroseness and impatience and grumbling of his servant. Be such things far from you Christians, whose walk is in zeal for the faith. But in order that God may be honoured in yourselves, suppress ye and tread down all your vices of mind and body. Be clothed with patience and courtesy; be replenished with the virtues and the hope of Christ. Bear all things for the sake of your Creator Himself; endure

all things; overcome and get above all things, that ye may win Christ the Lord. Great are these duties, and full of painstaking. But he that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; and they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.

III.

But because, as I apprehend it, ye are assigned to different offices, and you, Lucianus, are styled the head of them all, whom, also, by the grace of Christ given you, you are able to direct and dispose in their different spheres, I am certain that it will not displease you if I also bring before your notice, in a particular and summary manner, some of my sentiments on the subject of these offices. For I hear that one of you keeps the private moneys of the emperor; another the imperial robes and ornaments; another the precious vessels; another the books, who, I understand, does not as yet belong to the believers; and others the different parts of the household goods. And in what manner, therefore, these charges ought, in my judgment, to be executed, I shall indicate in a few words.

IV.

He who has charge of the private moneys of the emperor ought to keep every thing in an exact reckoning. He should be ready at any time to give an accurate account of all things. He should note down every thing in writing, if it is at all possible, before giving money to another. He should never trust such things to his memory, which, being drawn off day by day to other matters, readily fails us, so that, without writing, we sometimes honestly certify things which have never existed; neither should this kind of writing be of a commonplace order, but such as easily and clearly unfolds all things, and leaves the mind of the inquirer without any scruple or doubt on the subject; a thing which will easily be effected if a distinct and separate account is kept in writing of all receipts, and of the time when, and the person by whom, and the place at which they were made. And, in like manner, all that is paid out to others, or expended by order of the emperor, should be entered in its own place by itself in the reckoning; and that servant should be faithful and prudent, so that his lord may rejoice that he has set him over his goods, and may glorify Christ in him.

V.

Nor will the diligence and care of that servant be less who has the custody of the robes and imperial ornaments. All these he should enter in a most exact catalogue, and he should keep a note of what they are and of what sort, and in what places stored, and when he received them, and from whom, and whether they are soiled or unsoiled. All these things he should keep in his diligence; he should often review again, and he should often go over them that they may be the more readily known again. All these he should have at hand, and all in readiness; and he should always give the clearest information on every matter on which it is sought, to his prince or his superior, whenever they ask about any thing; and all this at the same time in such wise that every thing may be done in humility and cheerful patience, and that the name of Christ may be praised even in a small matter.

VI.

In a similar manner should he conduct himself to whose fidelity are entrusted the vessels of silver and gold, and crystal or murrha, for eating or for drinking. All these he should arrange suitably, of them all he should keep an account, and with all diligence he should make an inventory of how many and which sort of precious stones are in them. He should examine them all with great prudence; he should produce them in their proper places and on their proper occasions. And he should observe most carefully to whom he gives them, and at what time, and from whom he receives them again, lest there should occur any mistake or injurious suspicion, or perhaps some considerable loss in things of value.

VII.

¹ The most responsible person. however, among you, and also the most careful, will be he who may be entrusted by the emperor with the custody of his library. He will himself select for this office a person of proved knowledge, a man grave and adapted to great affairs, and ready to reply to all applications for information, such a one as Philadelphus chose for this charge, and appointed to the superintendence of his most noble library-I mean Aristeus, his confidential chamberlain, whom he sent also as his legate to Eleazar, with most magnificent gifts, in recognition of the translation of the Sacred Scriptures; and this person also wrote the full history of the Seventy Interpreters. If, therefore, it should happen that a believer in Christ is called to

this same office, he should not despise that secular literature and those Gentile intellects which please the emperor. To be praised are the poets for the greatness of their genius, the acuteness of their inventions, the aptness and lofty eloquence of their style. To be praised are the orators; to be praised also are the philosophers in their own class. To be praised, too, are the historians, who unfold to us the order of exploits, and the manners and institutions of our ancestors, and show us the rule of life from the proceedings of the ancients. On occasion also he will endeavour to laud the divine Scriptures, which, with marvellous care and most liberal expenditure, Ptolemy Philadelphus caused to be translated into our language; and sometimes, too, the Gospel and the Apostle will be landed for their divine oracles; and there will be an opportunity for introducing the mention of Christ; and, little by little, His exclusive divinity will be explained; and all these things may happily come to pass by the help of Christ.

² He ought, therefore, to know all the books which the emperor possesses; he should often turn them over, and arrange them neatly in their proper order by catalogue; if, however, he shall have to get new books, or old ones transcribed, he should be careful to obtain the most accurate copyists; and if that cannot be done, he should appoint learned men to the work of correction, and recompense them justly for their labours. He should also cause all manuscripts to be restored according to their need, and should embellish them, not so much with mere superstitious extravagance, as with useful adornment; and therefore he should not aim at having the whole manuscripts written on purple skins and in letters of gold, unless the emperor has specially required that. With the utmost, most submission, however, he should do every thing that is agreeable to Caesar. As he is able, he should, with all modesty, suggest to the emperor that he should read, or hear read, those books which suit his rank and honour, and minister to good use rather than to mere pleasure. He should himself first be thoroughly familiar with those books, and he should often commend them in presence of the emperor, and set forth, in an appropriate fashion, the testimony and the weight of those who approve them, that he may not seem to lean to his own understanding only.

VIII.

¹ Those, moreover, who have the care of the emperor's person should be in all things as prompt as possible; always, as we have said, cheerful in counten-

ance, sometimes merry, but ever with such perfect modesty as that he may commend it above all else in you all, and perceive that it is the true product of the religion of Christ. You should also all be elegant and tidy in person and attire, yet, at the same time, not in such wise as to attract notice by extravagance or affectation, lest Christian modesty be scandalised. Let every thing be ready at its proper time, and disposed as well as possible in its own order. There should also be due arrangement among you, and carefulness that no confusion appear in your work, nor any loss of property in any way; and appropriate places should be settled and suitably prepared, in accordance with the capacity (captu) and importance of the places.

² Besides this, your servants should be the most thoroughly honest, and circumspect, and modest, and as serviceable to you as possible. And see that you instruct and teach them in true doctrine with all the patience and charity of Christ; but if they despise and lightly esteem your instructions, then dismiss them, lest their wickedness by any hap recoil upon yourselves. For sometimes we have seen, and often we have heard, how masters have been held in ill-repute in consequence of the wickedness of their servants. If the emperor visits her imperial majesty, or she him, then should ye also be most circumspect in eye and demeanour, and in all your words. Let her mark your mastery of yourselves and your modesty; and let her followers and attendants mark your demeanour; let them mark it and admire it, and by reason thereof praise Jesus Christ our Lord in you. Let your conversation always be temperate and modest, and seasoned with religion as with salt. And, further, let there be no jealousy among you or contentiousness, which might bring you into all manner of confusion and division, and thus also make you objects of aversion to Christ and to the emperor, and lead you into the deepest abomination, so that not one stone of your building could stand upon another.

IX.

¹ And do thou, my dearest Lucianus, since thou art wise, bear with good-will the unwise; and they too may perchance become wise. Do no one an injury at any time, and provoke no one to anger. If an injury is done to you, look to Jesus Christ; and even as ye desire that He may remit your transgressions, do ye also forgive them theirs; and then also shall ye do away with all ill-will, and bruise the head of that ancient serpent, who is ever on the watch with all subtlety to undo your good works and your prosperous attainments. Let no day pass by without reading some portion of the Sacred Scriptures, at such

convenient hour as offers, and giving some space to meditation. And never cast off the habit of reading in the Holy Scriptures; for nothing feeds the soul and enriches the mind so well as those sacred studies do. But look to this as the chief gain you are to make by them, that, in all due patience, ye may discharge the duties of your office religiously and piously-that is, in the love of Christ-and despise all transitory objects for the sake of His eternal promises, which in truth surpass all human comprehension and understanding, and shall conduct you into everlasting felicity.

2 A happy adieu to you in Christ, my Lord Lucianus.

Anatolius of Alexandria

WRITINGS AND FRAGMENTS

d. c. AD 282

Bishop of Laodicea, mathematician and Aristotelian; wrote on the date of Easter.

TRANSLATOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

¹ Anatolius and Minor Writers. Anatolius of Alexandria. Translator's Biographical Notice. ² [a.d. 230–270–280. From Jerome we learn that Anatolius flourished in the reign of Probus and Carus, that he was a native of Alexandria, and that he became bishop of Laodicea. Eusebius gives a somewhat lengthened account of him, and speaks of him in terms of the strongest laudation, as one surpassing all the men of his time in learning and science. He tells us that he attained the highest eminence in arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, besides being a great proficient also in dialectics, physics, and rhetoric. His reputation was so great among the Alexandrians that they are said to have requested him to open a school for teaching the Aristotelian philosophy in their city. He did great service to his fellow-citizens in Alexandria on their being besieged by the Romans in a.d. 262, and was the means of saving the lives of numbers of them. After this he is said to have passed into Syria, where Theotecnus, the bishop of Cæsareia, ordained him, destining him to be his own successor in the bishopric. After this, however, having occasion to travel to Antioch to attend the synod convened to deal with the case of Paul of Samosata, as he passed through the city of Laodicea, he was detained by the people and made bishop of the place, in succession to Eusebius. This must have been about the year 270 a.d. How long he held that dignity, however, we do not know.

³ Eusebius tells us that he did not write many books, but yet enough to show us at once his eloquence and his erudition. Among these was a treatise on the Chronology of Easter; of which a considerable extract is preserved in Eusebius. The book itself exists now only in a Latin version, which is gener-

ally ascribed to Rufinus, and which was published by Ægidius Bucherius in his *Doctrina Temporum*, which was issued at Antwerp in 1634. Another work of his was the *Institutes of Arithmetic*, of which we have some fragments in the *θεολογούμενα τῆς ἀριθμητικῆς*, which was published in Paris in 1543. Some small fragments of his mathematical works, which have also come down to us, were published by Fabricius in his *Bibliotheca Græca*, iii. p. 462.

THE PASCHAL CANON OF ANATOLIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Contents

1 Chapter I Chapter II Chapter III Chapter IV Chapter V Chapter VI Chapter VII Chapter VIII Chapter IX Chapter X Chapter XI Chapter XII The moon's age set forth in the Julian Calendar The Paschal or Easter Table of Anatolius Chapter XV Chapter XVI Chapter XVII The Paschal Canon of Anatolius of Alexandria. I. 2 As we are about to speak on the subject of the order of the times and alternations of the world, we shall first dispose of the positions of diverse calculators; who, by reckoning only by the course of the moon, and leaving out of account the ascent and descent of the sun, with the addition of certain problems, have constructed diverse periods, self-contradictory, and such as are never found in the reckoning of a true computation; since it is certain that no mode of computation is to be approved, in which these two measures are not found together. For even in the ancient exemplars, that is, in the books of the Hebrews and Greeks, we find not only the course of the moon, but also that of the sun, and, indeed, not simply its course in the general, but even the separate and minutest moments of its hours all calculated, as we shall show at the proper time, when the matter in hand demands it. Of these Hippolytus made up a period of sixteen years with certain unknown courses of the moon. Others have reckoned by a period of twenty-five years, others by thirty, and some by eighty-four years, without, however, teaching thereby an exact method of calculating Easter.

3 But our predecessors, men most learned in the books of the Hebrews and Greeks,—I mean Isidore and Jerome and Clement,—although they have noted similar beginnings for the months just as they differ also in language, have, nevertheless, come harmoniously to one and the same most exact reckoning of Easter, day and month and season meeting in accord with the highest honour for the Lord's resurrection. But Origen also, the most erudite of all, and the acutest in making calculations,—a man, too, to whom

the epithet χαλκευτής is given,—has published in a very elegant manner a little book on Easter. And in this book, while declaring, with respect to the day of Easter, that attention must be given not only to the course of the moon and the transit of the equinox, but also to the passage (transcensum) of the sun, which removes every foul ambush and offence of all darkness, and brings on the advent of light and the power and inspiration of the elements of the whole world, he speaks thus: In the (matter of the) day of Easter, he remarks, I do not say that it is to be observed that the Lord's day should be found, and the seven days of the moon which are to elapse, but that the sun should pass that division, to wit, between light and darkness, constituted in an equality by the dispensation of the Lord at the beginning of the world;

4 and that, from one hour to two hours, from two to three, from three to four, from four to five, from five to six hours, while the light is increasing in the ascent of the sun, the darkness should decrease....and the addition of the twentieth number being completed, twelve parts should be supplied in one and the same day. But if I should have attempted to add any little drop of mine after the exuberant streams of the eloquence and science of some, what else should there be to believe but that it should be ascribed by all to ostentation, and, to speak more truly, to madness, did not the assistance of your promised prayers animate us for a little? For we believe that nothing is impossible to your power of prayer, and to your faith. Strengthened, therefore, by this confidence, we shall set bashfulness aside, and shall enter this most deep and unforeseen sea of the obscurest calculation, in which swelling questions and problems surge around us on all sides.

5 II. There is, then, in the first year, the new moon of the first month, which is the beginning of every cycle of nineteen years, on the six and twentieth day of the month called by the Egyptians Phamenoth. But, according to the months of the Macedonians, it is on the two-and-twentieth day of Dystrus. And, as the Romans would say, it is on the eleventh day before the Kalends of April. Now the sun is found on the said six-and-twentieth day of Phamenoth, not only as having mounted to the first segment, but as already passing the fourth day in it. And this segment they are accustomed to call the first dodecatemorion (twelfth part), and the equinox, and the beginning of months, and the head of the cycle, and the starting-point of the course of the planets. And the segment before this they call the last of the months, and the twelfth segment, and the last dodecatemorion, and the end of the

circuit of the planets. And for this reason, also, we maintain that those who place the first month in it, and who determine the fourteenth day of the Paschal season by it, make no trivial or common blunder.

6 III. Nor is this an opinion confined to ourselves alone. For it was also known to the Jews of old and before Christ, and it was most carefully observed by them. And this may be learned from what Philo, and Josephus, and Musæus have written; and not only from these, but indeed from others still more ancient, namely, the two Agathobuli, who were surnamed the Masters, and the eminent Aristobulus, who was one of the Seventy who translated the sacred and holy Scriptures of the Hebrews for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father, and dedicated his exegetical books on the law of Moses to the same kings. These writers, in solving some questions which are raised with respect to Exodus, say that all alike ought to sacrifice the Passover after the vernal equinox in the middle of the first month. And that is found to be when the sun passes through the first segment of the solar, or, as some among them have named it, the zodiacal circle.

7 IV. But this Aristobulus also adds, that for the feast of the Passover it was necessary not only that the sun should pass the equinoctial segment, but the moon also. For as there are two equinoctial segments, the vernal and the autumnal, and these diametrically opposite to each other, and since the day of the Passover is fixed for the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, the moon will have the position diametrically opposite the sun; as is to be seen in full moons. And the sun will thus be in the segment of the vernal equinox, and the moon necessarily will be at the autumnal equinox. V. I am aware that very many other matters were discussed by them, some of them with considerable probability, and others of them as matters of the clearest demonstration, by which they endeavour to prove that the festival of the Passover and unleavened bread ought by all means to be kept after the equinox. But I shall pass on without demanding such copious demonstrations (on subjects) from which the veil of the Mosaic law has been removed; for now it remains for us with unveiled face to behold ever as in a glass Christ Himself and the doctrines and sufferings of Christ. But that the first month among the Hebrews is about the equinox, is clearly shown also by what is taught in the book of Enoch.

8 VI. And, therefore, in this concurrence of the sun and moon, the Paschal festival is not to be celebrated, because as long as they are found in

this course the power of darkness is not overcome; and as long as equality between light and darkness endures, and is not diminished by the light, it is shown that the Paschal festival is not to be celebrated. Accordingly, it is enjoined that that festival be kept after the equinox, because the moon of the fourteenth, if before the equinox or at the equinox, does not fill the whole night. But after the equinox, the moon of the fourteenth, with one day being added because of the passing of the equinox, although it does not extend to the true light, that is, the rising of the sun and the beginning of day, will nevertheless leave no darkness behind it. And, in accordance with this, Moses is charged by the Lord to keep seven days of unleavened bread for the celebration of the Passover, that in them no power of darkness should be found to surpass the light. And although the outset of four nights begins to be dark, that is, the 17th and 18th and 19th and 20th, yet the moon of the 20th, which rises before that, does not permit the darkness to extend on even to midnight.

¶ VII. To us, however, with whom it is impossible for all these things to come aptly at one and the same time, namely, the moon's fourteenth, and the Lord's day, and the passing of the equinox, and whom the obligation of the Lord's resurrection binds to keep the Paschal festival on the Lord's day, it is granted that we may extend the beginning of our celebration even to the moon's twentieth. For although the moon of the 20th does not fill the whole night, yet, rising as it does in the second watch, it illumines the greater part of the night. Certainly if the rising of the moon should be delayed on to the end of two watches, that is to say, to midnight, the light would not then exceed the darkness, but the darkness the light. But it is clear that in the Paschal feast it is not possible that any part of the darkness should surpass the light; for the festival of the Lord's resurrection is one of light, and there is no fellowship between light and darkness. And if the moon should rise in the third watch, it is clear that the 22d or 23d of the moon would then be reached, in which it is not possible that there can be a true celebration of Easter. For those who determine that the festival may be kept at this age of the moon, are not only unable to make that good by the authority of Scripture, but turn also into the crime of sacrilege and contumacy, and incur the peril of their souls; inasmuch as they affirm that the true light may be celebrated along with something of that power of darkness which dominates all.

¹⁰ VIII. ¹¹ Accordingly, it is not the case, as certain calculators of Gaul allege, that this assertion is opposed by that passage in Exodus, where we read: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread until the one-and-twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses. From this they maintain that it is quite permissible to celebrate the Passover on the twenty-first day of the moon; understanding that if the twenty-second day were added, there would be found eight days of unleavened bread. A thing which cannot be found with any probability, indeed, in the Old Testament, as the Lord, through Moses, gives this charge: "Seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. Unless perchance the fourteenth day is not reckoned by them among the days of unleavened bread with the celebration of the feast; which, however, is contrary to the Word of the Gospel which says: "Moreover, on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus. And there is no doubt as to its being the fourteenth day on which the disciples asked the Lord, in accordance with the custom established for them of old, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?

¹² But they who are deceived with this error maintain this addition, because they do not know that the 13th and 14th, the 14th and 15th, the 15th and 16th, the 16th and 17th, the 17th and 18th, the 18th and 19th, the 19th and 20th, the 20th and 21st days of the moon are each found, as may be most surely proved, within a single day. For every day in the reckoning of the moon does not end in the evening as the same day in respect of number, as it is at its beginning in the morning. For the day which in the morning, that is up to the sixth hour and half, is numbered the 13th day of the month, is found at even to be the 14th. Wherefore, also, the Passover is enjoined to be extended on to the 21st day at even; which day, without doubt, in the morning, that is, up to that term of hours which we have mentioned, was reckoned the 20th. Calculate, then, from the end of the 13th day of the moon, which marks the beginning of the 14th, on to the end of the 20th, at which the 21st day also begins, and you will have only seven days of unleavened bread, in which, by the guidance of the Lord, it has been determined before that the most true feast of the Passover ought to be celebrated.

¹³ IX. But what wonder is it that they should have erred in the matter of the 21st day of the moon who have added three days before the equinox, in which they hold that the Passover may be celebrated? An assertion which

certainly must be considered altogether absurd, since, by the best-known historiographers of the Jews, and by the Seventy Elders, it has been clearly determined that the Paschal festival cannot be celebrated at the equinox. X.
14 But nothing was difficult to them with whom it was lawful to celebrate the Passover on any day when the fourteenth of the moon happened after the equinox. Following their example up to the present time all the bishops of Asia—as themselves also receiving the rule from an unimpeachable authority, to wit, the evangelist John, who leant on the Lord’s breast, and drank in instructions spiritual without doubt—were in the way of celebrating the Paschal feast, without question, every year, whenever the fourteenth day of the moon had come, and the lamb was sacrificed by the Jews after the equinox was past; not acquiescing, so far as regards this matter, with the authority of some, namely, the successors of Peter and Paul, who have taught all the churches in which they sowed the spiritual seeds of the Gospel, that the solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can be celebrated only on the Lord’s day. Whence, also, a certain contention broke out between the successors of these, namely, Victor, at that time bishop of the city of Rome, and Polycrates, who then appeared to hold the primacy among the bishops of Asia. And this contention was adjusted most rightfully by Irenæus, at that time president of a part of Gaul, so that both parties kept by their own order, and did not decline from the original custom of antiquity.

15 The one party, indeed, kept the Paschal day on the fourteenth day of the first month, according to the Gospel, as they thought, adding nothing of an extraneous kind, but keeping through all things the rule of faith. And the other party, passing the day of the Lord’s Passion as one replete with sadness and grief, hold that it should not be lawful to celebrate the Lord’s mystery of the Passover at any other time but on the Lord’s day, on which the resurrection of the Lord from death took place, and on which rose also for us the cause of everlasting joy. For it is one thing to act in accordance with the precept given by the apostle, yea, by the Lord Himself, and be sad with the sad, and suffer with him that suffers by the cross, His own word being: “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; and it is another thing to rejoice with the victor as he triumphs over an ancient enemy, and exults with the highest triumph over a conquered adversary, as He Himself also says: “Rejoice with Me; for I have found the sheep which I had lost.”

16 XI. 17 Moreover, the allegation which they sometimes make against us, that if we pass the moon's fourteenth we cannot celebrate the beginning of the Paschal feast in light, neither moves nor disturbs us. For, although they lay it down as a thing unlawful, that the beginning of the Paschal festival should be extended so far as to the moon's twentieth; yet they cannot deny that it ought to be extended to the sixteenth and seventeenth, which coincide with the day on which the Lord rose from the dead. But we decide that it is better that it should be extended even on to the twentieth day, on account of the Lord's day, than that we should anticipate the Lord's day on account of the fourteenth day; for on the Lord's day was it that light was shown to us in the beginning, and now also in the end, the comforts of all present and the tokens of all future blessings. For the Lord ascribes no less praise to the twentieth day than to the fourteenth. For in the book of Leviticus the injunction is expressed thus: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of this month, at even, is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord. Seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. The first day shall be to you one most diligently attended and holy. Ye shall do no servile work thereon. And the seventh day shall be to you more diligently attended and holier;

18 ye shall do no servile work thereon. And hence we maintain that those have contracted no guilt before the tribunal of Christ, who have held that the beginning of the Paschal festival ought to be extended to this day. And this, too, the most especially, as we are pressed by three difficulties, namely, that we should keep the solemn festival of the Passover on the Lord's day, and after the equinox, and yet not beyond the limit of the moon's twentieth day. 19 XII. But this again is held by other wise and most acute men to be an impossibility, because within that narrow and most contracted limit of a cycle of nineteen years, a thoroughly genuine Paschal time, that is to say, one held on the Lord's day and yet after the equinox, cannot occur. But, in order that we may set in a clearer light the difficulty which causes their incredulity, we shall set down, along with the courses of the moon, that cycle of years which we have mentioned; the days being computed before in which the year rolls on in its alternating courses, by Kalends and Ides and Nones, and by the sun's ascent and descent. XIII. The moon's age set forth in the Julian Calendar.

²⁰January, on the Kalends, one day, the moon's first (day); on the Nones, the 5th day, the moon's 5th; on the Ides, the 13th day, the moon's 13th. On the day before the Kalends of February, the 31st day, the moon's 1st; on the Kalends of February, the 32d day, the moon's 2d; on the Nones, the 36th day, the moon's 6th; on the Ides, the 44th day, the moon's 14th. On the day before the Kalends of March, the 59th day, the moon's 29th; on the Kalends of March, the 60th day, the moon's 1st; on the Nones, the 66th day, the moon's 7th; on the Ides, the 74th day, the moon's 15th. On the day before the Kalends of April, the 90th day, the moon's 2d; on the Kalends of April, the 91st day, the moon's 3d; on the Nones, the 95th day, the moon's 7th; on the Ides, the 103d day, the moon's 15th. On the day before the Kalends of May, the 120th day, the moon's 3d; on the Kalends of May, the 121st day, the moon's 4th; on the Nones, the 127th day, the moon's 10th; on the Ides, the 135th day, the moon's 18th. On the day before the Kalends of June, the 151st day, the moon's 3d; on the Kalends of June, the 152d day, the moon's 5th; on the Nones, the 153d day, the moon's 9th; on the Ides, the 164th day, the moon's 17th. On the day before the Kalends of July, the 181st day, the moon's 5th;

²¹on the Kalends of July, the 182d day, the moon's 6th; on the Nones, the 188th day, the moon's 12th; on the Ides, the 196th day, the moon's 20th. On the day before the Kalends of August, the 212th day, the moon's 5th; on the Kalends of August, the 213th day, the moon's 7th; on the Nones, the 217th day, the moon's 12th; on the Ides, the 225th day, the moon's 19th. On the day before the Kalends of September, the 243d day, the moon's 7th; on the Kalends of September, the 244th day, the moon's 8th; on the Nones, the 248th day, the moon's 12th; on the Ides, the 256th day, the moon's 20th. On the day before the Kalends of October, the 273d day, the moon's 8th; on the Kalends of October, the 247th day, the moon's 9th; on the Nones, the 280th day, the moon's 15th; on the Ides, the 288th day, the moon's 23d. On the day before the Kalends of November, the 304th day, the moon's 9th; on the Kalends of November, the 305th day, the moon's 10th; on the Nones, the 309th day, the moon's 14th; on the Ides, the 317th day, the moon's 22d. On the day before the Kalends of December, the 334th day, the moon's 10th; on the Kalends of December, the 335th day, the moon's 11th; on the Nones, the 339th day, the moon's 15th; on the Ides, the 347th day, the

moon's 23d. On the day before the Kalends of January, the 365th day, the moon's 11th;

²² on the Kalends of January, the 366th day, the moon's 12th. ²³ XIV. The Paschal or Easter Table of Anatolius. Now, then, after the reckoning of the days and the exposition of the course of the moon, whereon the whole revolves on to its end, the cycle of the years may be set forth from the commencement. This makes the Passover (Easter season) circulate between the 6th day before the Kalends of April and the 9th before the Kalends of May, according to the following table: Equinox / Moon / Easter / Moon 1. Sabbath / XXVI. / XVth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 17th April / XVIII. 2. Lord's Day / VII. / Kalends of April, i.e., 1st April / XIV. 3. IId Day (ferial) / XVIII. / XIth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 21st April / XVI. 4. IIId Day / XXIX. / Ides of April, i.e., 13th April / XIX. 5. IVth Day / X. / IVth before the Kalends of April, i.e., 29th March / XIV.

²⁴ 6. Vth Day / XXI. / XIVth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 18th April / XVI. 7. Sabbath / II. / VIth before the Kalends of April, i.e., 27th March / XVII. 8. Lord's Day / XIII. / Kalends of April, i.e., 1st of April / XX. 9. IId Day / XXIV. / XVIIIth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 14th March / XV. 10. IIId Day / V. / VIIIth before the Ides of April, i.e., 6th April / XV. 11. IVth Day / XVI. / IVth before the Kalends of April, i.e., 29th March / XX. 12. Vth Day / XXVII. / IIId before the Ides of April, i.e., 11th April / XV. 13. VIth Day / VIII. / IIId before the Nones of April, i.e., 3rd April / XVII. 14. Sabbath / XX. / IXth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 23rd April / XX. 15. Lord's Day / I. / VIth before the Ides of April, i.e., 8th April / XV.

²⁵ 16. IId Day / XII. / IId before the Kalends of April, i.e., 31st March / XVIII. 17. IVth Day / XXIII. / XIVth before the Kalends of May, i.e., 18th April / XIX. 18. Vth Day / IV. / IId before the Nones of April, i.e., 4th April / XIV. 19. VIth Day / XV. / VIth before the Kalends of April, i.e., 27th March / XVII. XV. ²⁶ This cycle of nineteen years is not approved of by certain African investigators who have drawn up larger cycles, because it seems to be somewhat opposed to their surmises and opinions. For these make up the best proved accounts according to their calculation, and determine a certain beginning or certain end for the Easter season, so as that the Paschal festival shall not be celebrated before the eleventh day before the Kalends of April, i.e., 24th March, nor after the moon's twenty-first, and the eleventh day before the Kalends of May, i.e., 21st April. But we hold that these are limits not

only not to be followed, but to be detested and overturned. For even in the ancient law it is laid down that this is to be seen to, viz., that the Passover be not celebrated before the transit of the vernal equinox, at which the last of the autumnal term is overtaken, on the fourteenth day of the first month, which is one calculated not by the beginnings of the day, but by those of the moon. And as this has been sanctioned by the charge of the Lord, and is in all things accordant with the Catholic faith, it cannot be doubtful to any wise man that to anticipate it must be a thing unlawful and perilous. And, accordingly, this only is it sufficient for all the saints and Catholics to observe, namely, that giving no heed to the diverse opinions of very many, they should keep the solemn festival of the Lord's resurrection within the limits which we have set forth.

²⁷ XVI. ²⁸ Furthermore, as to the proposal subjoined to your epistle, that I should attempt to introduce into this little book some notice of the ascent and descent of the sun, which is made out in the distribution of days and nights. The matter proceeds thus: In fifteen days and half an hour, the sun ascending by so many minutes, that is, by four in one day, from the eighth day before the Kalends of January, i.e., 25th December, to the eighth before the Kalends of April, i.e., 25th March, an hour is taken up; at which date there are twelve hours and a twelfth. On this day, towards evening, if it happen also to be the moon's fourteenth, the lamb was sacrificed among the Jews. But if the number went beyond that, so that it was the moon's fifteenth or sixteenth on the evening of the same day, on the fourteenth day of the second moon, in the same month, the Passover was celebrated; and the people ate unleavened bread for seven days, up to the twenty-first day at evening. Hence, if it happens in like manner to us, that the seventh day before the Kalends of April, 26th March, proves to be both the Lord's day and the moon's fourteenth, Easter is to be celebrated on the fourteenth. But if it proves to be the moon's fifteenth or sixteenth, or any day up to the twentieth, then our regard for the Lord's resurrection, which took place on the Lord's day, will lead us to celebrate it on the same principle;

²⁹ yet this should be done so as that the beginning of Easter may not pass beyond the close of their festival, that is to say, the moon's twentieth. And therefore we have said that those parties have committed no trivial offence who have ventured either on anticipating or on going beyond this number, which is given us in the divine Scriptures themselves. And from the eighth

day before the Kalends of April, 25th March, to the eighth before the Kalends of July, 24th June, in fifteen days an hour is taken up: the sun ascending every day by two minutes and a half, and the sixth part of a minute. And from the eighth day before the Kalends of July, 24th June, to the eighth before the Kalends of October, 24th September, in like manner, in fifteen days and four hours, an hour is taken up: the sun descending every day by the same number of minutes. And the space remaining on to the eighth day before the Kalends of January, 25th December, is determined in a similar number of hours and minutes. So that thus on the eighth day before the Kalends of January, for the hour there is the hour and half. For up to that day and night are distributed.

³⁰ And the twelve hours which were established at the vernal equinox in the beginning by the Lord's dispensation, being distributed over the night on the eighth before the Kalends of July, the sun ascending through those eighteen several degrees which we have noted, shall be found conjoined with the longer space in the twelfth. And, again, the twelve hours which should be fulfilled at the autumnal equinox in the sun's descent, should be found disjoined on the sixth before the Kalends of January as six hours divided into twelve, the night holding eighteen divided into twelve. And on the eighth before the Kalends of July, in like manner, it held six divided into twelve.

³¹ XVII. Be not ignorant of this, however, that those four determining periods, which we have mentioned, although they are approximated to the Kalends of the following months, yet hold each the middle of a season, viz., of spring and summer, and autumn and winter. And the beginnings of the seasons are not to be fixed at that point at which the Kalends of the month begin. But each season is to be begun in such way that the equinox divides the season of spring from its first day; and the season of summer is divided by the eighth day before the Kalends of July, and that of autumn by the eighth before the Kalends of October, and that of winter by the eighth before the Kalends of January in like manner.

FRAGMENTS OF THE BOOKS ON ARITHMETIC

¹ Fragments of the Books on Arithmetic. What is mathematics? Aristotle thinks that all philosophy consisted of theory and practice, and divides the practical into ethical and political, and the theoretic again into the theological, the physical, and the mathematical. And thus very clearly and skilfully he shows that mathematics is (a branch of) philosophy. The Chaldæans were

the originators of astronomy, and the Egyptians of geometry and arithmetic.... And whence did mathematics derive its name? ² Those of the Peripatetic school affirmed that in rhetoric and poetry, and in the popular music, any one may be an adept though he has gone through no process of study; but that in those pursuits properly called studies, none can have any real knowledge unless he has first become a student of them. Hence they supposed that the theory of these things was called Mathematics, from *μαθημα*, study, science. And the followers of Pythagoras are said to have given this more distinctive name of mathematics to geometry, and arithmetic alone. For of old these had each its own separate name; and they had up till then no name common to both. And he (Archytas) gave them this name, because he found science in them, and that in a manner suitable to man's study. For they (the Pythagoreans) perceived that these studies dealt with things eternal and immutable and perfect, in which things alone they considered that science consisted. But the more recent philosophers have given a more extensive application to this name, so that, in their opinion, the mathematician deals not only with substances incorporeal, and falling simply within the province of the understanding, but also with that which touches upon corporeal and sensible matter. For he ought to be cognisant of the course of the stars, and their velocity, and their magnitudes, and forms, and distances.

³ And, besides, he ought to investigate their dispositions to vision, examining into the causes, why they are not seen as of the same form and of the same size from every distance, retaining, indeed, as we know them to do, their dispositions relative to each other, but producing, at the same time, deceptive appearances, both in respect of order and position. And these are so, either as determined by the state of the heavens and the air, or as seen in reflecting and all polished surfaces and in transparent bodies, and in all similar kinds. In addition to this, they thought that the man ought to be versed in mechanics and geometry and dialectics. And still further, that he should engage himself with the causes of the harmonious combination of sounds, and with the composition of music; which things are bodies, or at least are to be ultimately referred to sensible matter.

⁴ What is mathematics? Mathematics is a theoretic science of things apprehensible by perception and sensation for communication to others. And before this a certain person indulging in a joke, while hitting his mark, said that mathematics is that science to which Homer's description of Discord

may be applied.— “Small at her birth, but rising every hour, While scarce the skies her horrid (mighty) head can bound, She stalks on earth and shakes the world around.” For it begins with a point and a line, and forthwith it takes heaven itself and all things within its compass. How many divisions are there of mathematics? Of the more notable and the earliest mathematics there are two principal divisions, viz., arithmetic and geometry. And of the mathematics which deals with things sensible there are six divisions, viz., computation (practical arithmetic), geodesy, optics, theoretical music, mechanics, and astronomy. But that neither the so-called tactics nor architecture, nor the popular music, nor physics, nor the art which is called equivocally the mechanical, constitutes, as some think, a branch of mathematics, we shall prove, as the discourse proceeds, clearly and systematically.

5 As to the circle having eight solids and six superficies and four angles.... What branches of arithmetic have closest affinity with each other? Computation and theoretical music have a closer affinity than others with arithmetic; for this department, being one also of quantity and ratio, approaches it in number and proportion. Optics and geodesy, again, are more in affinity with geometry. And mechanics and astrology are in general affinity with both. As to mathematics having its principles in hypothesis and about hypothesis. Now, the term hypothesis is used in three ways, or indeed in many ways. For according to one usage of the term we have the dramatic revolution; and in this sense there are said to be hypotheses in the dramas of Euripides. According to a second meaning, we have the investigation of matters in the special in rhetoric; and in this sense the Sophists say that a hypothesis must be proposed. And, according to a third signification, the beginning of a proof is called a hypothesis, as being the begging of certain matters with a view to the establishment of another in question. Thus it is said that Democritus used a hypothesis, namely, that of atoms and a vacuum; and Asclepiades that of atoms and pores. Now, when applied to mathematics, the term hypothesis is to be taken in the third sense.

6 That Pythagoras was not the only one who duly honoured arithmetic, but that his best known disciples did so too, being wont to say that “all things fit number.” That arithmetic has as its immediate end chiefly the theory of science, than which there is no end either greater or nobler. And its second end is to bring together in one all that is found in determinate substance. Who among the mathematicians has made any discovery? Eudemus

relates in his Astrologies that Cænopides found out the circle of the zodiac and the cycle of the great year. And Thales discovered the eclipse of the sun and its period in the tropics in its constant inequality. And Anaximander discovered that the earth is poised in space, and moves round the axis of the universe. And Anaximenes discovered that the moon has her light from the sun, and found out also the way in which she suffers eclipse. And the rest of the mathematicians have also made additions to these discoveries. We may instance the facts—that the fixed stars move round the axis passing through the poles, while the planets remove from each other round the perpendicular axis of the zodiac; and that the axis of the fixed stars and the planets is the side of a pentedecagon with four-and-twenty parts.

Phileas of Thmuis

WRITINGS AND FRAGMENTS

d. AD 306

Bishop and martyr of Egypt.

TRANSLATOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

¹Phileas. Translator's Biographical Notice. ²[a.d. 307. From Jerome we learn that this Phileas belonged to Thmuis, a town of Lower Egypt, the modern Tmai, which was situated between the Tanite and Mendesian branches of the Nile, an episcopal seat, and in the time of Valentinian and Theodosius the Great a place of considerable consequence, enjoying a separate government of its own. Eusebius speaks of him as a man not less distinguished for his services to his country than for his eminence in philosophical studies and his proficiency in foreign literature and science. He tells us further, that, along with another person of considerable importance, by name Philoromus, being brought to trial for his faith, he withstood the threats and insults of the judge, and all the entreaties of relatives and friends, to compromise his Christian belief, and was condemned to lose his head. Jerome also, in the passage already referred to, names him a true philosopher, and, at the same time, a godly martyr; and states, that on assuming the bishopric of his native district, he wrote a very, elegant book in praise of the martyrs. Of this book certain fragments are preserved for us in Eusebius. In addition to these we have also an epistle which the same Phileas seems to have written in the name of three other bishops, as well as himself, to Meletius, the bishop of Lycopolis, and founder of the Meletian schism. This epistle appears to have been written in Greek;

³but we possess only a Latin version, which, however, from its abrupt style, is believed to be very ancient. The four bishops whose names stand at the head of the Epistle—viz., Hesychius, Pachomius, Theodorus, and Phileas, are also mentioned by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl., viii. 13) as distinguished

martyrs. This epistle was written evidently when those bishops were in prison, and its date is determined by the mention of Peter as the then bishop of Alexandria. The martyrdom of Phileas is fixed with much probability as happening at Alexandria, under Maximus, about the year 307 a.d. [But see Neale, Patriarchate of Alex., i. pp. 97–101, for his view of two bearing this name.]

EPISTLE OF PHILEAS I

1 Fragments of the Epistle of Phileas to the People of Thmuis.

Contents

2 Part I Part II Part III I. Having before them all these examples and signs and illustrious tokens which are given us in the divine and holy Scriptures, the blessed martyrs who lived with us did not hesitate, but, directing the eye of their soul in sincerity to that God who is over all, and embracing with willing mind the death which their piety cost them, they adhered steadfastly to their vocation. For they learned that our Lord Jesus Christ endured man's estate on our behalf, that He might destroy all sin, and furnish us with the provision needful for our entrance into eternal life. "For He thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, taking upon Him the form of a servant: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross." For which reason also these Christ-bearing martyrs sought zealously the greater gifts, and endured, some of them, every kind of pain and all the varied contrivances of torture not merely once, but once and again; and though the guards showed their fury against them not only by threatenings in word, but also by deeds of violence, they did not swerve from their resolution, because perfect love casteth out fear.

3 II. 4 And to narrate their virtue and their manly endurance under every torment, what language would suffice? For as every one who chose was at liberty to abuse them, some beat them with wooden clubs, and others with rods, and others with scourges, and others again with thongs, and others with ropes. And the spectacle of these modes of torture had great variety in it, and exhibited vast malignity. For some had their hands bound behind them, and were suspended on the rack and had every limb in their body stretched with a certain kind of pulleys. Then after all this the torturers, according to their orders, lacerated with the sharp iron claws the whole body,

not merely, as in the case of murderers, the sides only, but also the stomach and the knees and the cheeks. And others were hung up in mid-air, suspended by one hand from the portico, and their sufferings were fiercer than any other kind of agony by reason of the distention of their joints and limbs. And others were bound to pillars, face to face, not touching the ground with their feet, but hanging with all the weight of the body, so that their chains were drawn all the more tightly by reason of the tension. And this they endured not simply as long as the governor spoke with them, or had leisure to hear them, but well-nigh through the whole day.

5 For when he passed on to others he left some of those under his authority to keep watch over these former, and to observe whether any of them, being overcome by the torture, seemed likely to yield. But he gave them orders at the same time to cast them into chains without sparing, and thereafter, when they were expiring, to throw them on the ground and drag them along. For they said that they would not give themselves the slightest concern about us, but would look upon us and deal with us as if we were nothing at all. This second mode of torture our enemies devised then over and above the scourging. 6 III. And there were also some who, after the tortures, were placed upon the stocks and had both their feet stretched through all the four holes, so that they were compelled to lie on their back on the stocks, as they were unable (to stand) in consequence of the fresh wounds they had over the whole body from the scourging. And others being thrown upon the ground lay prostrated there by the excessively frequent application of the tortures; in which condition they exhibited to the onlookers a still more dreadful spectacle than they did when actually undergoing their torments, bearing, as they did, on their bodies the varied and manifold tokens of the cruel ingenuity of their tortures. While this state of matters went on, some died under their tortures, putting the adversary to shame by their constancy. And others were thrust half-dead into the prison, where in a few days, worn out with their agonies, they met their end. But the rest, getting sure recovery under the application of remedies, through time and their lengthened detention in prison, became more confident. And thus then, when they were commanded to make their choice between these alternatives, namely, either to put their hand to the unholy sacrifice and thus secure exemption from further trouble, and obtain from them their abominable sentence of absolution and liberation, or else to refuse to sacrifice, and thus expect the judgment of

death to be executed on them, they never hesitated, but went cheerfully to death. For they knew the sentence declared for us of old by the Holy Scriptures: "He that sacrificeth to other gods," it is said, "shall be utterly destroyed." And again "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

THE EPISTLE OF THE SAME PHILEAS OF THMUIS TO MELETIUS, BISHOP
OF LYCOPOLIS

1 Epistle of Phileas 2

Contents

2 Beginning Conclusion The Beginning of the Epistle of the Bishops.
3 Hesychius, Pachomius, Theodorus, and Phileas, to Meletius, our friend and fellow-minister in the Lord, greeting. Some reports having reached us concerning thee, which, on the testimony of certain individuals who came to us, spake of certain things foreign to divine order and ecclesiastical rule which are being attempted, yea, rather which are being done by thee, we, in an ingenuous manner held them to be untrustworthy, regarding them to be such as we would not willingly credit, when we thought of the audacity implied in their magnitude and their uncertain attempts. But since many who are visiting us at the present time have lent some credibility to these reports, and have not hesitated to attest them as facts, we, to our exceeding surprise, have been compelled to indite this letter to thee. And what agitation and sadness have been caused to us all in common and to each of us individually by (the report of) the ordination carried through by thee in parishes having no manner of connection with thee, we are unable sufficiently to express. We have not delayed, however, by a short statement to prove your practice wrong. There is the law of our fathers and forefathers, of which neither art thou thyself ignorant, established according to divine and ecclesiastical order; for it is all for the good pleasure of God and the zealous regard of better things. By them it has been established and settled that it is not lawful for any bishop to celebrate ordinations in other parishes than his own;

4 a law which is exceedingly important and wisely devised. For, in the first place, it is but right that the conversation and life of those who are ordained should be examined with great care; and in the second place, that all confusion and turbulence should be done away with. For every one shall have enough to do in managing his own parish, and in finding with great care and many anxieties suitable subordinates among these with whom he has passed his whole life, and who have been trained under his hands. But thou,

neither making any account of these things, nor regarding the future, nor considering the law of our sainted fathers and those who have been taken to Christ time after time, nor the honour of our great bishop and father, Peter, on whom we all depend in the hope which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor softened by our imprisonments and trials, and daily and multiplied reproach, hast ventured on subverting all things at once. And what means will be left thee for justifying thyself with respect to these things? But perhaps thou wilt say: I did this to prevent many being drawn away with the unbelief of many, because the flocks were in need and forsaken, there being no pastor with them. Well, but it is most certain that they are not in such destitution: in the first place, because there are many going about them and in a position to act as visitors;

5 and in the second place, even if there was some measure of neglect on their side, then the proper way would have been for the representation to be made promptly by the people, and for us to take account of them according to their desert. But they knew that they were in no want of ministers, and therefore they did not come to seek them. They knew that we were wont to discharge them with an admonition from such inquisition for matter of complaint, or that everything was done with all carefulness which seemed to be for their profit; for all was done under correction, and all was considered with well-approved honesty. Thou, however, giving such strenuous attention to the deceits of certain parties and their vain words, hast made a stealthy leap to the celebrating of ordinations. For if, indeed, those with thee were constraining thee to this, and in their ignorance were doing violence to ecclesiastical order, thou oughtest to have followed the common rule and have informed us by letter; and in that way what seemed expedient would have been done. And if perchance some persuaded you to credit their story that it was all over with us,—a thing of which thou couldest not have been ignorant, because there were many passing and repassing by us who might visit you,—even although, I say, this had been the case, yet thou oughtest to have waited for the judgment of the superior father and for his allowance of this practice.

6 But without giving any heed to these matters, but indulging a different expectation, yea rather, indeed, denying all respect to us, thou hast provided certain rulers for the people. For now we have learned, too, that there were also divisions, because thy unwarrantable exercise of the right of ordination

displeased many. And thou wert not persuaded to delay such procedure or restrain thy purpose readily even by the word of the Apostle Paul, the most blessed seer, and the man who put on Christ, who is the Christ of all of us no less; for he, in writing to his dearly-beloved son Timothy, says: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. And thus he at once shows his own anxious consideration for him, and gives him his example and exhibits the law according to which, with all carefulness and caution, parties are to be chosen for the honour of ordination. We make this declaration to thee, that in future thou mayest study to keep within the safe and salutary limits of the law.

7 The Conclusion of the Epistle of the Bishops. After receiving and perusing this epistle, he neither wrote any reply nor repaired to them in the prison, nor went to the blessed Peter. But when all these bishops and presbyters and deacons had suffered martyrdom in the prison at Alexandria, he at once entered Alexandria. Now in that city there was a certain person, by name Isidorus, turbulent in character, and possessed with the ambition of being a teacher. And there was also a certain Arius, who wore the habit of piety, and was in like manner possessed with the ambition to be a teacher. And when they discovered the object of Meletius's passion and what it was that he sought, hastening to him, and looking with an evil eye on the episcopal authority of the blessed Peter, that the aim and desire of Meletius might be made patent, they discovered to Meletius certain presbyters, then in hiding, to whom the blessed Peter had given power to act as parish-visitors. And Meletius recommending them to improve the opportunity given them for rectifying their error, suspended them for the time, and by his own authority ordained two persons in their place, namely, one in prison and another in the mines. On learning these things the blessed Peter, with much endurance, wrote to the people of Alexandria an epistle in the following terms.

P A R T T W O

Antioch, Edessa and the East

*A priest of Antioch, a philosopher's attack on Mani, and the
Syriac documents of Edessa.*

Malchion

SHORTER WRITINGS

fl. c. AD 270

Presbyter of Antioch who exposed Paul of Samosata.

A POINT IN THE SAME DISPUTATION

Did I not say before that you do not admit that the only-begotten Son, who is from all eternity before every creature, was made substantially existent in the whole person of the Saviour; that is to say, was united with Him according to substance?

FRAGMENTS APPARENTLY OF THE SAME EPISTLE OF THE SYNOD OF ANTIOCH

To Wit, of that Part of It Which It is Agreed that Eusebius Left Unnoticed.

¹He says, therefore, in the commentaries (they speak of Paul), that he maintains the dignity of wisdom. And thereafter: If, however, he had been united according to formation and generation, this is what befalls the man. And again: For that wisdom, as we believe, was not congenerate with humanity substantially, but qualitatively. And thereafter: In what respect, moreover, does he mean to allege that the formation of Christ is different and diverse from ours, when we hold that, in this one thing of prime consequence, His constitution differs from ours, to wit, that what in us is the interior man, is in Him the Word. And thereafter: If he means to allege that Wisdom dwells in Him as in no other, this expresses indeed the same mode of inhabitation, though it makes it excel in respect of measure and multitude; He being supposed to derive a superior knowledge from the Wisdom, say for example, twice as large as others, or any other number of times as large; or, again, it may be less than twice as large a knowledge as others have. This, however, the catholic and ecclesiastical canons disallow, and hold rather that other men indeed received of Wisdom as an inspiration from without, which,

though with them, is distinct from them; but that Wisdom in verity came of itself substantially into His body by Mary.

2 And after other matters: And they hold that there are not two Sons. But if Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if Wisdom also is the Son of God; and if the Wisdom is one thing and Jesus Christ another, there are two Sons. And thereafter: Moreover understand (Paul would say) the union with Wisdom in a different sense, namely as being one according to instruction and participation; but not as if it were formed according to the substance in the body. And after other matters: Neither was the God who bore the human body and had assumed it, without knowledge of human affections in the first instance; nor was the human body without knowledge, in the first instance, of divine operations in him in whom He (the God) was, and by whom He wrought these operations. He was formed, in the first instance, as man in the womb; and, in the second instance, the God also was in the womb, united essentially with the human, that is to say, His substance being wedded with the man.

FROM THE ACTS OF THE DISPUTATION CONDUCTED BY MALCHION
AGAINST PAUL OF SAMOSATA

The compound is surely made tip of the simple elements, even as in the instance of Jesus Christ, who was made one (person), constituted by God the Word, and a human body which is of the seed of David, and who subsists without having any manner of division between the two, but in unity. You, however, appear to me to decline to admit a constitution after this fashion: to the effect that there is not in this person, the Son of God according to substance, but only the Wisdom according to participation. For you made this assertion, that the Wisdom bears dispensing, and therefore cannot be compounded; and you do not consider that the divine Wisdom remained undiminished, even as it was before it evacuated itself; and thus in this self-evacuation, which it took upon itself in compassion (for us), it continued undiminished and unchangeable. And this assertion you also make, that the Wisdom dwelt in Him, just as we also dwell in houses, the one in the other, and yet not as if we formed a part of the house, or the house a part of us.

THE EPISTLE WRITTEN BY MALCHION

In Name of the Synod of Antioch, Against Paul of Samosata.

To Dionysius and Maximus, and to all our fellows in the ministry throughout the world, both bishops and presbyters and deacons, and to the whole

Catholic Church under heaven, Helenus and Hymenaeus and Theophilus and Theotecnus and Maximus, Proclus, Nicomas, and Aelianus, and Paul and Bolanus and Protogenes and Hierax and Eutychius and Theodorus and Malchion and Lucius, and all the others who are with us, dwelling in the neighbouring cities and nations, both bishops and presbyters and deacons, together with the churches of God, send greeting to our brethren beloved in the Lord. 1. After some few introductory words, they proceed thus:-We wrote to many of the bishops, even those who live at a distance, and exhorted them to give their help in relieving us from this deadly doctrine; among these, we addressed, for instance, Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, and Firmilian of Cappadocia, those men of blessed name. Of these, the one wrote to Antioch without even deigning to honour the leader in this error by addressing him; nor did he write to him in his own name, but to the whole district, of which letter we have also subjoined a copy. And Firmilian, who came twice in person, condemned the innovations in doctrine, as we who were present know and bear witness, and as many others know as well as we. But when he (Paul) promised to give up these opinions, he believed him; and hoping that, without any reproach to the Word, the matter would be rightly settled, he postponed his decision; in which action, however, he was deceived by that denier of his God and Lord, and betrayer of the faith which he formerly held. And now Firmilian was minded to cross to Antioch; and he came as far as Tarsus, as having already made trial of the man's infidel iniquity. But when we had just assembled, and were calling for him and waiting for his arrival, his end came upon him.

2. After other matters again, they tell us in the following terms of what manner of life he was:-But there is no need of judging his actions when he was outside (the Church), when he revolted from the faith and turned aside to spurious and illegitimate doctrines. Nor need we say any thing of such matters as this, that, whereas he was formerly poor and beggarly, having neither inherited a single possession from his fathers, nor acquired any property by art or by any trade, he has now come to have excessive wealth by his deeds of iniquity and sacrilege, and by those means by which he despoils and concusses the brethren, casting the injured unfairly in their suit, and promising to help them for a price, yet deceiving them all the while and to their loss, taking advantage of the readiness of those in difficulties to give in order to get deliverance from what troubled them, and thus supposing that gain is

godliness. Neither need I say any thing about his pride and the haughtiness with which he assumed worldly dignities, and his wishing to be styled procurator rather than bishop, and his strutting through the market-places, and reading letters and reciting them as he walked in public, and his being escorted by multitudes of people going before him and following him; so that he brought ill-will and hatred on the faith by his haughty demeanour and by the arrogance of his heart.

Nor shall I say any thing of the quackery which he practises in the ecclesiastical assemblies, in the way of courting popularity and making a great parade, and astounding by such arts the minds of the less sophisticated; nor of his setting up for himself a lofty tribunal and throne, so unlike a disciple of Christ; nor of his having a secretum and calling it by that name, after the manner of the rulers of this world; nor of his striking his thigh with his hand and beating the tribunal with his feet; nor of his censuring and insulting those who did not applaud him nor shake their handkerchiefs, as is done in the theatres, nor bawl out and leap about after the manner of his partisans, both male and female, who were such disorderly listeners to him, but chose to hear reverently and modestly as in the house of God; nor of his unseemly and violent attacks in the congregation upon the expounders of the Word who have already departed this life, and his magnifying of himself, not like a bishop, but like a sophist and juggler; nor of his putting a stop to the psalms sung in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the recent compositions of recent men, and preparing women to sing psalms in honour of himself in the midst of the Church. in the great day of the Paschal festival, which choristers one might shudder to hear.

And besides, he acted on those bishops and presbyters, who fawned upon him in the neighbouring districts and cities, to advance the like opinions in their discourses to their people. 3. For we may say, to anticipate a little what we intend to write below, that he does not wish to acknowledge that the Son of God came down from heaven. And this is a statement which shall not be made to depend on simple assertion; for it is proved abundantly by those memoranda which we sent you, and not least by that passage in which he says that Jesus Christ is from below. And they who sing his praise and eulogise him among the people, declare that their impious teacher has come down as an angel from heaven. And such utterances the haughty man does not check, but is present even when they are made. And then again there are

these women-these adopted sisters, as the people of Antioch call them-who are kept by him and by the presbyters and deacons with him, whose incurable sins in this and other matters, though he is cognisant of them, and has convicted them, he connives at concealing, with the view of keeping the men subservient to himself, and preventing them, by fear for their own position, from daring to accuse him in the matter of his impious words and deeds. Besides this, he has made his followers rich, and for that he is loved and admired by those who set their hearts on these things. But why should we write of these things? For, beloved, we know that the bishop and all the clergy ought to be an example in all good works to the people.

Nor are we ignorant of the fact that many have fallen away through introducing these women into their houses, while others have fallen under suspicion. So that, even although one should admit that he has been doing nothing disgrace fill in this matter, yet he ought at least to have avoided the suspicion that springs out of such a course of conduct. lest perchance some might be offended, or find inducement to imitate him. For how, then, should any one censure another, or warn him to beware of yielding to greater familiarity with a woman, lest perchance he might slip, as it is written: if, although he has dismissed one, he has still retained two with him, and these in the bloom of their youth, and of fair countenance; and if when he goes away he takes them with him; and all this, too, while he indulges in luxury and surfeiting?

4. And on account of these things all are groaning and lamenting with themselves; yet they have such a dread of his tyranny and power that they cannot venture on accusing him. And of these things, as we have said already, one might take account in the case of a man who held Catholic sentiments and belonged to our own number; but as to one who has betrayed the mystery (of the faith), and who swaggers with the abominable heresy of Artemas,-for why should we hesitate to disclose his father?-we consider it unnecessary to exact of him an account for these things. 5. Then at the close of the epistle they add the following words:-We have been compelled, therefore, to excommunicate this man, who thus opposeth God Himself, and refuses submission, and to appoint in his place another bishop for the Church Catholic, and that, as we trust, by the providence of God-namely, the son of Demetrianus, a man of blessed memory, and one who presided over the same Church with distinction in former times, Domnus by name, a man endowed

with all the noble qualities which become a bishop. And this fact we have communicated to you in order that ye may write him, and receive letters of communion from him. And that other may write to Artemas, if it please him; and those who think with Artemas may hold communion with him, if they are so minded.

Of the Manichaeans

ALEXANDER OF LYCOPOLIS

c. AD 300

Neoplatonist philosopher of Egypt who wrote against the Manichaeans.

PART I

¹Of the Manichæans. Chapter I.—The Excellence of the Christian Philosophy; The Origin of Heresies Amongst Christians. The philosophy of the Christians is termed simple. But it bestows very great attention to the formation of manners, enigmatically insinuating words of more certain truth respecting God; the principal of which, so far as any earnest serious purpose in those matters is concerned, all will have received when they assume an efficient cause, very noble and very ancient, as the originator of all things that have existence. For Christians leaving to ethical students matters more toilsome and difficult, as, for instance, what is virtue, moral and intellectual; and to those who employ their time in forming hypotheses respecting morals, and the passions and affections, without marking out any element by which each virtue is to be attained, and heaping up, as it were, at random precepts less subtle—the common people, hearing these, even as we learn by experience, make great progress in modesty, and a character of piety is imprinted on their manners, quickening the moral disposition which from such usages is formed, and leading them by degrees to the desire of what is honourable and good.

²But this being divided into many questions by the number of those who come after, there arise many, just as is the case with those who are devoted to dialectics, some more skilful than others, and, so to speak, more sagacious in handling nice and subtle questions; so that now they come forward as parents and originators of sects and heresies. And by these the formation of morals is hindered and rendered obscure; for those do not attain unto certain verity of discourse who wish to become the heads of the sects, and the

common people is to a greater degree excited to strife and contention. And there being no rule nor law by which a solution may be obtained of the things which are called in question, but, as in other matters, this ambitious rivalry running out into excess, there is nothing to which it does not cause damage and injury.

PART 2

Chapter II.—The Age of Manichæus, or Manes; His First Disciples; The Two Principles; Manichæan Matter. So in these matters also, whilst in novelty of opinion each endeavours to show himself first and superior, they brought this philosophy, which is simple, almost to a nullity. Such was he whom they call Manichæus, a Persian by race, my instructor in whose doctrine was one Papus by name, and after him Thomas, and some others followed them. They say that the man lived when Valerian was emperor, and that he served under Sapor, the king of the Persians, and having offended him in some way, was put to death. Some such report of his character and reputation has come to me from those who were intimately acquainted with him. He laid down two principles, God and Matter. God he called good, and matter he affirmed to be evil. But God excelled more in good than matter in evil. But he calls matter not that which Plato calls it, which becomes everything when it has received quality and figure, whence he terms it all-embracing—the mother and nurse of all things; nor what Aristotle calls an element, with which form and privation have to do, but something beside these. For the motion which in individual things is incomposite, this he calls matter. On the side of God are ranged powers, like handmaids, all good; and likewise, on the side of matter are ranged other powers, all evil. Moreover, the bright shining, the light, and the superior, all these are with God; while the obscure, and the darkness, and the inferior are with matter. God, too, has desires, but they are all good; and matter, likewise, which are all evil.

PART 3

¹ Chapter III.—The Fancies of Manichæus Concerning Matter. ² It came to pass on a time that matter conceived a desire to attain to the superior region; and when it had arrived there, it admired the brightness and the light which was with God. And, indeed, it wished to seize on for itself the place of pre-eminence, and to remove God from His position. God, moreover, deliberated how to avenge Himself upon matter, but was destitute of the evil neces-

sary to do so, for evil does not exist in the house and abode of God. He sent, therefore, the power which we call the soul into matter, to permeate it entirely. For it will be the death of matter, when at length hereafter this power is separated from it. So, therefore, by the providence of God, the soul was commingled with matter, an unlike thing with an unlike. Now by this commingling the soul has contracted evil, and labours under the same infirmity as matter. For, just as in a corrupted vessel, the contents are oftentimes vitiated in quality, so, also the soul that is in matter suffers some such change, and is deteriorated from its own nature so as to participate in the evil of matter. But God had compassion upon the soul, and sent forth another power, which we call Demiurge, that is, the Creator of all things;

3 and when this power had arrived, and taken in hand the creation of the world, it separated from matter as much power as from the commingling had contracted no vice and stain, and hence the sun and moon were first formed; but that which had contracted some slight and moderate stain, this became the stars and the expanse of heaven. Of the matter from which the sun and the moon was separated, part was cast entirely out of the world, and is that fire in which, indeed, there is the power of burning, although in itself it is dark and void of light, being closely similar to night. But in the rest of the elements, both animal and vegetable, in those the divine power is unequally mingled. And therefore the world was made, and in it the sun and moon who preside over the birth and death of things, by separating the divine virtue from matter, and transmitting it to God.

PART 4

1 Chapter IV.—The Moon's Increase and Wane; The Manichæan Trifling Respecting It; Their Dreams About Man and Christ; Their Foolish System of Abstinence. 2 He ordained this, forsooth, to supply to the Demiurge, or Creator, another power which might attract to the splendour of the sun; and the thing is manifest, as one might say, even to a blind person. For the moon in its increase receives the virtue which is separated from matter, and during the time of its augmentation comes forth full of it. But when it is full, in its wanings, it remits it to the sun, and the sun goes back to God. And when it has done this, it waits again to receive from another full moon a migration of the soul to itself, and receiving this in the same way, it suffers it to pass on to God. And this is its work continually, and in every age. And in the sun some such image is seen, as is the form of man. And matter ambitiously

strove to make man from itself by mingling together all its virtue, so that it might have some portion of soul. But his form contributed much to man's obtaining a greater share, and one beyond all other animals, in the divine virtue. For he is the image of the divine virtue, but Christ is the intelligence. Who, when He had at length come from the superior region, dismissed a very great part of this virtue to God. And at length being crucified, in this way He furnished knowledge, and fitted the divine virtue to be crucified in matter. Because, therefore, it is the Divine will and decree that matter should perish, they abstain from those things which have life, and feed upon vegetables, and everything which is void of sense. They abstain also from marriage and the rites of Venus, and the procreation of children, that virtue may not strike its root deeper in matter by the succession of race; nor do they go abroad, seeking to purify themselves from the stain which virtue has contracted from its admixture with matter.

PART 5

¹ Chapter V.—The Worship of the Sun and Moon Under God; Support Sought for the Manichæans in the Grecian Fables; The Authority of the Scriptures and Faith Despised by the Manichæans. ² These things are the principal of what they say and think. And they honour very especially the sun and moon, not as gods, but as the way by which it is possible to attain unto God. But when the divine virtue has been entirely separated off, they say that the exterior fire will fall, and burn up both itself and all else that is left of matter. Those of them who are better educated, and not unacquainted with Greek literature, instruct us from their own resources. From the ceremonies and mysteries, for instance: by Bacchus, who was cut out from the womb, is signified that the divine virtue is divided into matter by the Titans, as they say; from the poet's fable of the battle with the Giants, is indicated that not even they were ignorant of the rebellion of matter against God. I indeed will not deny, that these things are not sufficient to lead away the minds of those who receive words without examining them, since the deception caused by discourse of this sort has drawn over to itself some of those who have pursued the study of philosophy with me; but in what manner I should approach the thing to examine into it, I am at a loss indeed. For their hypotheses do not proceed by any legitimate method, so that one might institute an examination in accordance with these; neither are there any principles of demonstrations, so that we may see what follows on these;

3 but theirs is the rare discovery of those who are simply said to philosophize. These men, taking to themselves the Old and New Scriptures, though they lay it down that these are divinely inspired, draw their own opinions from thence; and then only think they are refuted, when it happens that anything not in accordance with these is said or done by them. And what to those who philosophize after the manner of the Greeks, as respects principles of demonstration, are intermediate propositions; this, with them, is the voice of the prophets. But here, all these things being eliminated, and since those matters, which I before mentioned, are put forward without any demonstration, and since it is necessary to give an answer in a rational way, and not to put forward other things more plausible, and which might prove more enticing, my attempt is rather troublesome, and on this account the more arduous, because it is necessary to bring forward arguments of a varied nature. For the more accurate arguments will escape the observation of those who have been convinced beforehand by these men without proof, if, when it comes to persuasion, they fall into the same hands. For they imagine that they proceed from like sources. There is, therefore, need of much and great diligence, and truly of God, to be the guide of our argument.

PART 6

1 Chapter VI.—The Two Principles of the Manichæans; Themselves Contrverted; The Pythagorean Opinion Respecting First Principles; Good and Evil Contrary; The Victory on the Side of Good. 2 They lay down two principles, God and Matter. If he (Manes) separates that which comes into being from that which really exists, the supposition is not so faulty in this, that neither does matter create itself, nor does it admit two contrary qualities, in being both active and passive; nor, again, are other such theories proposed concerning the creative cause as it is not lawful to speak of. And yet God does not stand in need of matter in order to make things, since in His mind all things substantially exist, so far as the possibility of their coming into being is concerned. But if, as he seems rather to mean, the unordered motion of things really existent under Him is matter, first, then, he unconsciously sets up another creative cause (and yet an evil one), nor does he perceive what follows from this, namely, that if it is necessary that God and matter should be supposed, some other matter must be supposed to God; so that to each of the creative causes there should be the subject matter. Therefore, instead of two, he will be shown to give us four first principles. Wonderful, too, is the dis-

inction. For if he thinks this to be God, which is good, and wishes to conceive of something opposite to Him, why does he not, as some of the Pythagoreans, set evil over against Him?

3 It is more tolerable, indeed, that two principles should be spoken of by them, the good and the evil, and that these are continually striving, but the good prevails. For if the evil were to prevail, all things would perish. Wherefore matter, by itself, is neither body, nor is it exactly incorporeal, nor simply any particular thing; but it is something indefinite, which, by the addition of form, comes to be defined; as, for instance, fire is a pyramid, air an octahedron, water an eikosahedron, and earth a cube; how, then, is matter the unordered motion of the elements? By itself, indeed, it does not subsist, for if it is motion, it is in that which is moved; but matter does not seem to be of such a nature, but rather the first subject, and unorganized, from which other things proceed. Since, therefore, matter is unordered motion, was it always conjoined with that which is moved, or was it ever separate from it? For, if it were ever by itself, it would not be in existence; for there is no motion without something moved. But if it was always in that which is moved, then, again, there will be two principles—that which moves, and that which is moved. To which of these two, then, will it be granted that it subsists as a primary cause along with God?

PART 7

1 Chapter VII.—Motion Vindicated from the Charge of Irregularity; Circular; Straight; Of Generation and Corruption; Of Alteration, and Quality Affecting Sense. 2 There is added to the discourse an appendix quite foreign to it. For you may reasonably speak of motion not existing. And what, also, is the matter of motion? Is it straight or circular? Or does it take place by a process of change, or by a process of generation and corruption? The circular motion, indeed, is so orderly and composite, that it is ascribed to the order of all created things; nor does this, in the Manichæan system, appear worthy to be impugned, in which move the sun and the moon, whom alone, of the gods, they say that they venerate. But as regards that which is straight: to this, also, there is a bound when it reaches its own place. For that which is earthly ceases entirely from motion, as soon as it has touched the earth. And every animal and vegetable makes an end of increasing when it has reached its limit. Therefore the stoppage of these things would be more properly the death of matter, than that endless death, which is, as it were, woven for it by

them. But the motion which arises by a process of generation and corruption it is impossible to think of as in harmony with this hypothesis, for, according to them, matter is unbegotten. But if they ascribe to it the motion of alteration, as they term it, and that by which we suffer change by a quality affecting the sense, it is worth while to consider how they come to say this.

³ For this seems to be the principal thing that they assert, since by matter it comes to pass, as they say, that manners are changed, and that vice arises in the soul. For in altering, it will always begin from the beginning; and, proceeding onwards, it will reach the middle, and thus will it attain unto the end. But when it has reached the end, it will not stand still, at least if alteration is its essence. But it will again, by the same route, return to the beginning, and from thence in like manner to the end; nor will it ever cease from doing this. As, for instance, if α and γ suffer alteration, and the middle is β , α by being changed, will arrive at β , and from thence will go on to γ . Again returning from the extreme γ to β , it will at some time or other arrive at α ; and this goes on continuously. As in the change from black, the middle is dun, and the extreme, white. Again, in the contrary direction, from white to dun, and in like manner to black; and again from white the change begins, and goes the same round.

PART 8

¹ Chapter VIII.—Is Matter Wicked? Of God and Matter. ² Is matter, in respect of alteration, an evil cause? It is thus proved that it is not more evil than good. For let the beginning of the change be from evil. Thus the change is from this to good through that which is indifferent. But let the alteration be from good. Again the beginning goes on through that which is indifferent. Whether the motion be to one extreme or to the other, the method is the same, and this is abundantly set forth. All motion has to do with quantity; but quality is the guide in virtue and vice. Now we know that these two are generically distinguished. But are God and matter alone principles, or does there remain anything else which is the mean between these two? For if there is nothing, these things remain unintermingled one with another. And it is well said that if the extremes are intermingled, there is a necessity for some thing intermediate to connect them. But if something else exists, it is necessary that that something be either body or incorporeal, and thus a third adventitious principle makes its appearance. First, therefore, if we suppose God and matter to be both entirely incorporeal, so that neither is in the

other, except as the science of grammar is in the soul; to understand this of God and matter is absurd. But if, as in a vacuum, as some say, the vacuum is surrounded by this universe; the other, again, is without substance, for the substance of a vacuum is nothing.

³ But if as accidents, first, indeed, this is impossible; for the thing that wants substance cannot be in any place; for substance is, as it were, the vehicle underlying the accident. But if both are bodies, it is necessary for both to be either heavy or light, or middle; or one heavy, and another light, or intermediate. If, then, both are heavy, it is plainly necessary that these should be the same, both among light things and those things which are of the middle sort; or if they alternate, the one will be altogether separate from the other. For that which is heavy has one place, and that which is middle another, and the light another. To one belongs the superior, to the other the inferior, and to the third the middle. Now in every spherical figure the inferior part is the middle; for from this to all the higher parts, even to the topmost superficies, the distance is every way equal, and, again, all heavy bodies are borne from all sides to it. Wherefore, also, it occurs to me to laugh when I hear that matter moving without order,—for this belongs to it by nature,—came to the region of God, or to light and brightness, and such-like. But if one be body, and the other incorporeal, first, indeed, that which is body is alone capable of motion. And then if they are not intermingled, each is separate from the other according to its proper nature.

⁴ But if one be mixed up with the other, they will be either mind or soul or accident. For so only it happens that things incorporeal are mixed up with bodies.

PART 9

¹ Chapter IX.—The Ridiculous Fancies of the Manichæans About the Motion of Matter Towards God; God the Author of the Rebellion of Matter in the Manichæan Sense; The Longing of Matter for Light and Brightness Good; Divine Good None the Less for Being Communicated. ² But in what manner, and from what cause, was matter brought to the region of God? for to it by nature belong the lower place and darkness, as they say; and the upper region and light are contrary to its nature. Wherefore there is then attributed to it a supernatural motion; and something of the same sort happens to it, as if a man were to throw a stone or a lump of earth upwards; in this way, the thing being raised a little by the force of the person throwing,

when it has reached the upper regions, falls back again into the same place. Who, then, hath raised matter to the upper region? Of itself, indeed, and from itself, it would not be moved by that motion which belongs to it. It is necessary, then, that some force should be applied to it for it to be borne aloft, as with the stone and the lump of earth. But they leave nothing else to it but God. It is manifest, therefore, what follows from their argument. That God, according to them, by force and necessity, raised matter aloft to Himself. But if matter be evil, its desires are altogether evil. Now the desire of evil is evil, but the desire of good is altogether good. Since, then, matter has desired brightness and light, its desire is not a bad one; just as it is not bad for a man living in vice, afterwards to come to desire virtue.

3 On the contrary, he is not guiltless who, being good, comes to desire what is evil. As if any one should say that God desires the evils which are attaching to matter. For the good things of God are not to be so esteemed as great wealth and large estates, and a large quantity of gold, a lesser portion of which remain with the owner, if one effect a transfer of them to another. But if an image of these things must be formed in the mind, I think one would adduce as examples wisdom and the sciences. As, therefore, neither wisdom suffers diminution nor science, and he who is endowed with these experiences no loss if another be made partaker of them; so, in the same way, it is contrary to reason to think that God grudges matter the desire of what is good; if, indeed, with them we allow that it desires it.

PART 10

1 Chapter X.—The Mythology Respecting the Gods; The Dogmas of the Manichæans Resemble This: the Homeric Allegory of the Battle of the Gods; Envy and Emulation Existing In God According to the Manichæan Opinion; These Vices are to Be Found in No Good Man, and are to Be Accounted Disgraceful. 2 Moreover, they far surpass the mythologists in fables, those, namely, who either make Coelus suffer mutilation, or idly tell of the plots laid for Saturn by his son, in order that that son might attain the sovereignty; or those again who make Saturn devour his sons and to have been cheated of his purpose by the image of a stone that was presented to him. For how are these things which they put forward dissimilar to those? When they speak openly of the war between God and matter, and say not these things either in a mythological sense, as Homer in the *Iliad*; when he makes Jupiter to rejoice in the strife and war of the gods with each other, thus obscurely

signifying that the world is formed of unequal elements, fitted one into another, and either conquering or submitting to a conqueror. And this has been advanced by me, because I know that people of this sort, when they are at a loss for demonstration, bring together from all sides passages from poems, and seek from them a support for their own opinions. Which would not be the case with them if they had only read what they fell in with some reflection. But, when all evil is banished from the company of the gods, surely emulation and envy ought especially to have been got rid of. Yet these men leave these things with God, when they say that God formed designs against matter, because it felt a desire for good.

3 But with which of those things which God possessed could He have wished to take vengeance on matter? In truth, I think it to be more accurate doctrine to say that God is of a simple nature, than what they advance. Nor, indeed, as in the other things, is the enunciation of this fancy easy. For neither is it possible to demonstrate it simply and with words merely, but with much instruction and labour. But we all know this, that anger and rage, and the desire of revenge upon matter, are passions in him who is so agitated. And of such a sort, indeed, as it could never happen to a good man to be harassed by them, much less then can it be that they are connected with the Absolute Good.

PART II

Chapter XI.—The Transmitted Virtue of the Manichæans; The Virtues of Matter Mixed with Equal or Less Amount of Evil. To other things, therefore, our discourse has come round about again. For, because they say that God sent virtue into matter, it is worth our while to consider whether this virtue, so far as it pertains to good, in respect of God is less, or whether it is on equal terms with Him. For if it is less, what is the cause? For the things which are with God admit of no fellowship with matter. But good alone is the characteristic of God, and evil alone of matter. But if it is on equal terms with Him, what is the reason that He, as a king, issues His commands, and it involuntarily undertakes this labour? Moreover, with regard to matter, it shall be inquired whether, with respect to evil, the virtues are alike or less. For if they are less, they are altogether of less evil. By fellowship therefore with the good it is that they become so. For there being two evils, the less has plainly by its fellowship with the good attained to be what it is. But they leave nothing good around matter. Again, therefore, another question arises. For if some

other virtue, in respect of evil, excels the matter which is prevailing, it becomes itself the presiding principle. For that which is more evil will hold the sway in its own dominion.

PART 12

¹ Chapter XII.—The Destruction of Evil by the Immission of Virtue Rejected; Because from It Arises No Diminution of Evil; Zeno's Opinion Discarded, that the World Will Be Burnt Up by Fire from the Sun. ² But that God sent virtue into matter is asserted without any proof, and it altogether wants probability. Yet it is right that this should have its own explanation. The reason of this they assert, indeed, to be that there might be no more evil, but that all things should become good. It was necessary for virtue to be intermingled with evil, after the manner of the athletes, who, clasped in a firm embrace, overcome their adversaries, in order that, by conquering evil, it might make it to cease to exist. But I think it far more dignified and worthy of the excellence of God, at the first conception of things existent, to have abolished matter. But I think they could not allow this, because that something evil is found existing, which they call matter. But it is not any the more possible that things should cease to be such as they are, in order that one should admit that some things are changed into that which is worse. And it is necessary that there should be some perception of this, because these present things have in some manner or other suffered diminution, in order that we might have better hopes for the future. For well has it been answered to the opinion of Zeno of Citium, who thus argued that the world would be destroyed by fire: "Everything which has anything to burn will not cease from burning until it has consumed the whole; and the sun is a fire, and will it not burn what it has?"

³ Whence he made out, as he imagined, that the universe would be destroyed by fire. But to him a facetious fellow is reported to have said, "But I indeed yesterday, and the year before, and a long time ago, have seen, and now in like manner do I see, that no injury has been experienced by the sun; and it is reasonable that this should happen in time and by degrees, so that we may believe that at some time or other the whole will be burnt up. And to the doctrine of Manichæus, although it rests upon no proof, I think that the same answer is apposite, namely, that there has been no diminution in the present condition of things, but what was before in the time of the first man, when brother killed brother, even now continues to be; the same wars, and

more diverse desires. Now it would be reasonable that these things, if they did not altogether cease, should at least be diminished, if we are to imagine that they are at some time to cease. But while the same things come from them, what is our expectation of them for the future?

PART 13

¹ Chapter XIII.—Evil by No Means Found in the Stars and Constellations; All the Evils of Life Vain in the Manichæan Opinion, Which Bring on the Extinction of Life; Their Fancy Having Been Above Explained Concerning the Transportation of Souls from the Moon to the Sun. ² But what things does he call evil? As for the sun and moon, indeed, there is nothing lacking; but with respect to the heavens and the stars, whether he says that there is some such thing, and what it is, it is right that we should next in order examine. But irregularity is according to them evil, and unordered motion, but these things are always the same, and in the same manner; nor will any one have to blame any of the planets for venturing to delay at any time in the zodiac beyond the fixed period; nor again any of the fixed stars, as if it did not abide in the same seat and position, and did not by circumvolution revolve equally around the world, moving as it were one step backward in a hundred years. But on the earth, if he accuses the roughness of some spots, or if pilots are offended at the storms on the sea; first, indeed, as they think, these things have a share of good in them. For should nothing germinate upon earth, all the animals must presently perish. But this result will send on much of the virtue which is intermingled with matter to God, and there will be a necessity for many moons, to accommodate the great multitude that suddenly approaches. And the same language they hold with respect to the sea. For it is a piece of unlooked-for luck to perish, in order that those things which perish may pursue the road which leads most quickly to God. And the wars which are upon the earth, and the famines, and everything which tends to the destruction of life, are held in very great honour by them. For everything which is the cause of good is to be had in honour. But these things are the cause of good, because of the destruction which accompanies them, if they transmit to God the virtue which is separated from those who perish.

PART 14

¹Chapter XIV.—Noxious Animals Worshipped by the Egyptians; Man by Arts an Evil-Doer; Lust and Injustice Corrected by Laws and Discipline; Contingent and Necessary Things in Which There is No Stain. ²And, as it seems, we have been ignorant that the Egyptians rightly worship the crocodile and the lion and the wolf, because these animals being stronger than the others devour their prey, and entirely destroy it; the eagle also and the hawk, because they slaughter the weaker animals both in the air and upon the earth. But perhaps also, according to them, man is for this reason held in especial honour, because most of all, by his subtle inventions and arts, he is wont to subdue most of the animals. And lest he himself should have no portion in this good, he becomes the food of others. Again, therefore, those generations are, in their opinion, absurd, which from a small and common seed produce what is great; and it is much more becoming, as they think, that these should be destroyed by God, in order that the divine virtue may be quickly liberated from the troubles incident to living in this world. But what shall we say with respect to lust, and injustice, and things of this sort, Manichæus will ask. Surely against these things discipline and law come to the rescue. Discipline, indeed, using careful forethought that nothing of this sort may have place amongst men; but law inflicting punishment upon any one who has been caught in the commission of anything unjust. But, then, why should it be imputed to the earth as a fault, if the husbandman has neglected to subdue it? because the sovereignty of God, which is according to right, suffers diminution, when some parts of it are productive of fruits, and others not so; or when it has happened that when the winds are sweeping, according to another cause, some derive benefit therefrom, whilst others against their will have to sustain injuries? Surely they must necessarily be ignorant of the character of the things that are contingent, and of those that are necessary. For they would not else thus account such things as prodigies.

PART 15

Chapter XV.—The Lust and Desire of Sentient Things; Demons; Animals Sentient; So Also the Sun and the Moon and Stars; The Platonic Doctrine, Not the Christian. Whence, then, come pleasure and desire? For these are the principal evils that they talk of and hate. Nor does matter appear to be anything else. That these things, indeed, only belong to animals which are en-

dowed with sense, and that nothing else but that which has sense perceives desire and pleasure, is manifest. For what perception of pleasure and pain is there in a plant? What in the earth, water, or air? And the demons, if indeed they are living beings endowed with sense, for this reason, perhaps, are delighted with what has been instituted in regard to sacrifices, and take it ill when these are wanting to them; but nothing of this sort can be imagined with respect to God. Therefore those who say, “Why are animals affected by pleasure and pain?” should first make the complaint, “Why are these animals endowed with sense, or why do they stand in need of food?” For if animals were immortal, they would have been set free from corruption and increase; such as the sun and moon and stars, although they are endowed with sense. They are, however, beyond the power of these, and of such a complaint. But man, being able to perceive and to judge, and being potentially wise,—for he has the power to become so,—when he has received what is peculiar to himself, treads it under foot.

PART 16

¹ Chapter XVI.—Because Some are Wise, Nothing Prevents Others from Being So; Virtue is to Be Acquired by Diligence and Study; By a Sounder Philosophy Men are to Be Carried Onwards to the Good; The Common Study of Virtue Has by Christ Been Opened Up to All. ² In general, it is worth while to inquire of these men, “Is it possible for no man to become good, or is it in the power of any one? For if no man is wise, what of Manichæus himself? I pass over the fact that he not only calls others good, but he also says that they are able to make others such. But if one individual is entirely good, what prevents all from becoming good? For what is possible for one is possible also for all. And by the means by which one has become virtuous, by the same all may become so, unless they assert that the larger share of this virtue is intercepted by such. Again, therefore, first, What necessity is there for labour in submitting to discipline (for even whilst sleeping we may become virtuous), or what cause is there for these men rousing their hearers to hopes of good? For even though wallowing in the mire with harlots, they can obtain their proper good. But if discipline, and better instruction and diligence in acquiring virtue, make a man to become virtuous, let all become so, and that oft-repeated phrase of theirs, the unordered motion of matter, is made void.

³ But it would be much better for them to say that wisdom is an instrument given by God to man, in order that by bringing round by degrees to

good that which arises to them, from the fact of their being endowed with sense, out of desire or pleasure, it might remove from them the absurdities that flow from them. For thus they themselves who profess to be teachers of virtue would be objects of emulation for their purpose, and for their mode of life, and there would be great hopes that one day evils will cease, when all men have become wise. And this it seems to me that Jesus took into consideration; and in order that husbandmen, carpenters, builders, and other artisans, might not be driven away from good, He convened a common council of them altogether, and by simple and easy conversations He both raised them to a sense of God, and brought them to desire what was good.

PART 17

¹ Chapter XVII.—The Manichæan Idea of Virtue in Matter Scouted; If One Virtue Has Been Created Immaterial, the Rest are Also Immaterial; Material Virtue an Exploded Notion. ² Moreover, how do they say, did God send divine virtue into matter? For if it always was, and neither is God to be understood as existing prior to it, nor matter either, then again, according to Manichæus, there are three first principles. Perhaps also, a little further on, there will appear to be many more. But if it be adventitious, and something which has come into existence afterwards, how is it void of matter? And if they make it to be a part of God, first, indeed, by this conception, they assert that God is composite and corporeal. But this is absurd, and impossible. And if He fashioned it, and is without matter, I wonder that they have not considered, neither the man himself, nor his disciples, that if (as the orthodox say, the things that come next in order subsist while God remains) God created this virtue of His own free-will, how is it that He is not the author of all other things that are made without the necessity of any pre-existent matter? The consequences, in truth, of this opinion are evidently absurd; but what does follow is put down next in order. Was it, then, the nature of this virtue to diffuse itself into matter? If it was contrary to its nature, in what manner is it intermingled with it? But if this was in accordance with its nature, it was altogether surely and always with matter. But if this be so, how is it that they call matter evil, which, from the beginning, was intermingled with the divine virtue? In what manner, too, will it be destroyed, the divine virtue which was mingled with it at some time or other seceding to itself? For that it preserves safely what is good, and likely to be productive of some other

good to those to whom it is present, is more reasonable than that it should bring destruction or some other evil upon them.

PART 18

¹ Chapter XVIII.—Dissolution and Inherence According to the Manichæans; This is Well Put, Ad Hominem, with Respect to Manes, Who is Himself in Matter. ² This then is the wise assertion which is made by them—namely, that as we see that the body perishes when the soul is separated from it, so also, when virtue has left matter, that which is left, which is matter, will be dissolved and perish. First, indeed, they do not perceive that nothing existent can be destroyed into a nonexistent. For that which is nonexistent does not exist. But when bodies are disintegrated, and experience a change, a dissolution of them takes place; so that a part of them goes to earth, a part to air, and a part to something else. Besides, they do not remember that their doctrine is, that matter is unordered motion. But that which moves of itself, and of which motion is the essence, and not a thing accidentally belonging to it—how is it reasonable to say that when virtue departs, that which was, even before virtue descended into it, should cease to be? Nor do they see the difference, that every body which is devoid of soul is immoveable. For plants also have a vegetable soul. But motion itself, and yet unordered motion they assert to be the essence of matter. But it were better, that just as in a lyre which sounds out of tune, by the addition of harmony, everything is brought into concord;

³ so the divine virtue when intermixed with that unordered motion, which, according to them, is matter, should add a certain order to it in the place of its innate disorder, and should always add it suitably to the divine time. For I ask, how was it that Manichæus himself became fitted to treat of these matters, and when at length did he enunciate them? For they allow that he himself was an admixture of matter, and of the virtue received into it. Whether therefore being so, he said these things in unordered motion, surely the opinion is faulty; or whether he said them by means of the divine virtue, the dogma is dubious and uncertain; for on the one side, that of the divine virtue, he participates in the truth; whilst on the side of unordered motion, he is a partaker in the other part, and changes to falsehood.

PART 19

¹Chapter XIX.—The Second Virtue of the Manichæans Beset with the Former, and with New Absurdities; Virtue, Active and Passive, the Fashioner of Matter, and Concrete with It; Bodies Divided by Manichæus into Three Parts. ²But if it had been said that divine virtue both hath adorned and does adorn matter, it would have been far more wisely said, and in a manner more conducing to conciliate faith in the doctrine and discourses of Manichæus. But God hath sent down another virtue. What has been already said with respect to the former virtue, may be equally said with respect to this, and all the absurdities which follow on the teaching about their first virtue, the same may be brought forward in the present case. But another, who will tolerate? For why did not God send some one virtue which could effect everything? If the human mind is so various towards all things, so that the same man is endowed with a knowledge of geometry, of astronomy, of the carpenter's art, and the like, is it then impossible for God to find one such virtue which should be sufficient for him in all respects, so as not to stand in need of a first and second? And why has one virtue the force rather of a creator, and another that of the patient and recipient, so as to be well fitted for admixture with matter. For I do not again see here the cause of good order, and of that excess which is contrary to it. If it was evil, it was not in the house of God.

³For since God is the only good, and matter the only evil, we must necessarily say that the other things are of a middle nature, and placed as it were in the middle. But there is found to be a different framer of those things which are of a middle nature, when they say that one cause is creative, and another admixed with matter? Perhaps, therefore, it is that primary antecedent cause which more recent writers speak of in the book *περὶ τῶν διαφορῶν*. But when the creative virtue took in hand the making of the world, then they say that there was separated from matter that which, even in the admixture, remained in its own virtue, and from this the sun and the moon had their beginning. But that which to a moderate and slight degree had contracted vice and evil, this formed the heaven and the constellations. Lastly came the rest encompassed within these, just as they might happen, which are admixtures of the divine virtue and of matter.

PART 20

Chapter XX.—The Divine Virtue in the View of the Same Manichæus Corporeal and Divisible; The Divine Virtue Itself Matter Which Becomes Everything; This is Not Fitting. I, indeed, besides all these things, wonder that they do not perceive that they are making the divine virtue to be corporeal, and dividing it, as it were, into parts. For why, as in the case of matter, is not the divine virtue also passible and divisible throughout, and from one of its parts the sun made, and from another the moon? For clearly this is what they assert to belong to the divine virtue; and this is what we said was the property of matter, which by itself is nothing, but when it has received form and qualities, everything is made which is divided and distinct. If, therefore, as from one subject, the divine virtue, only the sun and the moon have their beginning, and these things are different, why was anything else made? But if all things are made, what follows is manifest, that divine virtue is matter, and that, too, such as is made into forms. But if nothing else but the sun and moon are what was created by the divine virtue, then what is intermixed with all things is the sun and moon; and each of the stars is the sun and moon, and each individual animal of those who live on land, and of fowls, and of creatures amphibious. But this, not even those who exhibit juggling tricks would admit, as, I think, is evident to every one.

PART 21

¹ Chapter XXI.—Some Portions of the Virtue Have Good in Them, Others More Good; In the Sun and the Moon It is Incorrupt, in Other Things Depraved; An Improbable Opinion. ² But if any one were to apply his mind to what follows, the road would not appear to be plain and straightforward, but more arduous even than that which has been passed. For they say that the sun and moon have contracted no stain from their admixture with matter. And now they cannot say how other things have become deteriorated contrary to their own proper nature. For if, when it was absolute and by itself, the divine virtue was so constituted that one portion of it was good, and another had a greater amount of goodness in it, according to the old tale of the centaurs, who as far as the breast were men, and in the lower part horses, which are both good animals, but the man is the better of the two; so also, in the divine virtue, it is to be understood that the one portion of it is the better and the more excellent, and the other will occupy the second and inferior place.

And in the same way, with respect to matter, the one portion possesses, as it were, an excess of evil; while others again are different, and about that other the language will be different. For it is possible to conceive that from the beginning the sun and moon, by a more skilful and prudent judgment, chose for themselves the parts of matter that were less evil for the purposes of admixture, that they might remain in their own perfection and virtue;

³ but in the lapse of time, when the evils lost their force and became old, they brought out so much of the excess in the good, while the rest of its parts fell away, not, indeed, without foresight, and yet not with the same foresight, did each object share according to its quantity in the evil that was in matter. But since, with respect to this virtue, nothing of a different kind is asserted by them, but it is to be understood throughout to be alike and of the same nature, their argument is improbable; because in the admixture part remains pure and incorrupt, while the other has contracted some share of evil.

PART 22

¹ Chapter XXII.—The Light of the Moon from the Sun; The Inconvenience of the Opinion that Souls are Received in It; The Two Deluges of the Greeks.

² Now, they say that the sun and the moon having by degrees separated the divine virtue from matter, transmit it to God. But if they had only to a slight degree frequented the schools of the astronomers, it would not have happened to them to fall into these fancies, nor would they have been ignorant that the moon, which, according to the opinion of some, is itself without light, receives its light from the sun, and that its configurations are just in proportion to its distance from the sun, and that it is then full moon when it is distant from the sun one hundred and eighty degrees. It is in conjunction when it is in the same degree with the sun. Then, is it not wonderful how it comes to pass that there should be so many souls, and from such diverse creatures? For there is the soul of the world itself, and of the animals, of plants, of nymphs, and demons, and amongst these are distinguished by appearance those of fowls, of land animals, and animals amphibious; but in the moon one like body is always seen by us. And what of the continuity of this body? When the moon is half-full, it appears a semicircle, and when it is in its third quarter, the same again. How then, and with what figure, are they assumed into the moon? For if it be light as fire, it is probable that they would not only ascend as far as the moon, but even higher, continually;

³but if it be heavy, it would not be possible for them at all to reach the moon. And what is the reason that that which first arrives at the moon is not immediately transmitted to the sun, but waits for the full moon until the rest of the souls arrive? When then the moon, from having been full, decreases, where does the virtue remain during that time? until the moon, which has been emptied of the former souls, just as a desolated city, shall receive again a fresh colony. For a treasure-house should have been marked out in some part of the earth, or of the clouds, or in some other place, where the congregated souls might stand ready for emigration to the moon. But, again, a second question arises. What then is the cause that it is not full immediately? or why does it again wait fifteen days? Nor is this less to be wondered at than that which has been said, that never within the memory of man has the moon become full after the fifteen days. Nay, not even—in the time of the deluge of Deucalion, nor in that of Phoroneus, when all things, so to speak, which were upon the face of the earth perished, and it happened that a great quantity of virtue was separated from matter. And, besides these things, one must consider the productiveness of generations, and their barrenness, and also the destruction of them;

⁴and since these things do not happen in order, neither ought the order of the full moon, nor the these of the waning moon, to be so carefully observed.

PART 23

¹Chapter XXIII.—The Image of Matter in the Sun, After Which Man is Formed; Trifling Fancies; It is a Mere Fancy, Too, that Man Is Formed from Matter; Man is Either a Composite Being, or a Soul, or Mind and Understanding. Neither is this to be regarded with slight attention. For if the divine virtue which is in matter be infinite, those things cannot diminish it which the sun and moon fashion. For that which remains from that finite thing which has been assumed is infinite. But if it is finite, it would be perceived by the senses in intervals proportionate to the amount of its virtue that had been subtracted from the world. But all things remain as they were. Now what understanding do these things not transcend in their incredibility, when they assert that man was created and formed after the image of matter that is seen in the sun? For images are the forms of their archetypes. But if they include man's image in the sun, where is the exemplar after which his image is formed? For, indeed, they are not going to say that man is

really man, or divine virtue; for this, indeed, they mix up with matter, and they say that the image is seen in the sun, which, as they think, was formed afterwards from the secretion of matter. Neither can they bring forward the creative cause of all things, for this they say was sent to preserve safety to the divine virtue; so that, in their opinion, this must be altogether ascribed to the sun; for this reason, doubtless, that it happens by his arrival and presence that the sun and moon are separated from matter.

² Moreover, they assert that the image is seen in the star; but they say that matter fashioned man. In what manner, and by what means? For it is not possible that this should fashion him. For besides that, thus according to them, man is the empty form of an empty form, and having no real existence, it has not as yet been possible to conceive how man can be the product of matter. For the use of reason and sense belongs not to that matter which they assume. Now what, according to them, is man? Is he a mixture of soul and body? Or another thing, or that which is superior to the entire soul, the mind? But if he is mind, how can the more perfect and the better part be the product of that which is worse; or if he be soul (for this they say is divine virtue), how can they, when they have taken away from God the divine virtue, subject this to the creating workmanship of matter? But if they leave to him body alone, let them remember again that it is by itself immovable, and that they say that the essence of matter is motion. Neither do they think that anything of itself, and its own genius, is attracted to matter. Nor is it reasonable to lay it down, that what is composed of these things is the product of this. To think, indeed, that that which is fashioned by any one is inferior to its fashioner seems to be beyond controversy.

³ For thus the world is inferior to its Creator or Fashioner, and the works of art inferior to the artificer. If then man be the product of matter, he must surely be inferior to it. Now, men leave nothing inferior to matter; and it is not reasonable that the divine virtue should be commingled with matter, and with that which is inferior to it. But the things which they assert out of indulgence, as it were, and by way of dispensation, these they do not seem to understand. For what is the reason of their thinking that matter has bound the image of God to the substance of man? Or, why is not the image sufficient, as in a mirror, that man should appear? Or, as the sun himself is sufficient for the origination and destruction of all things that are made, hath he imitated an image in the work of their creation? With which of those things

which he possessed? Was it with the divine virtue which was mingled with it, so that the divine virtue should have the office of an instrument in respect of matter? Is it by unordered motion that he will thus give matter a form? But all like things, in exquisite and accurate order, by imitating, attain their end. For they do not suppose that a house, or a ship, or any other product of art, is effected by disorder; nor a statue which art has fashioned to imitate man.

PART 24

¹ Chapter XXIV.—Christ is Mind, According to the Manichæans; What is He in the View of the Church? Incongruity in Their Idea of Christ; That He Suffered Only in Appearance, a Dream of the Manichæans; Nothing is Attributed to the Word by Way of Fiction. ² Christ, too, they do not acknowledge; yet they speak of Christ, but they take some other element, and giving to the Word, designating His sacred person, some other signification than that in which it is rightly received, they say that He is mind. But if, when they speak of Him as that which is known, and that which knows, and wisdom as having the same meaning, they are found to agree with those things which the Church doctors say of Him, how comes it then that they reject all that is called ancient history? But let us see whether they make Him to be something adventitious and new, and which has come on from without, and by accident, as the opinion of some is. For they who hold this opinion say, as seems very plausible, that the seventh year, when the powers of perception became distinct, He made His entrance into the body. But if Christ be mind, as they imagine, then will He be both Christ and not Christ. For before that mind and sense entered, He was not. But if Christ, as they will have it, be mind, then into Him already existing does the mind make its entrance, and thus, again, according to their opinion, will it be mind. Christ, therefore, is and is not at the same time. But if, according to the more approved sect of them, mind is all things which are, since they assume matter to be not produced, and coeval so to speak with God, this first mind and matter they hold to be Christ; if, indeed, Christ be the mind, which is all things, and matter is one of those things which are, and is itself not produced.

³ They say it was by way of appearance, and in this manner, that the divine virtue in matter was affixed to the cross; and that He Himself did not undergo this punishment, since it was impossible that He should suffer this; which assertion Manichæus himself has taken in hand to teach in a book written upon the subject, that the divine virtue was enclosed in matter, and

again departs from it. The mode of this they invent. That it should be said, indeed, in the doctrine of the Church, that He gave Himself up for the remission of sins, obtains credit from the vulgar, and appears likewise in the Greek histories, which say that some “surrendered themselves to death in order to ensure safety to their countrymen.” And of this doctrine the Jewish history has an example, which prepares the son of Abraham as a sacrifice to God. But to subject Christ to His passion merely for the sake of display, betrays great ignorance, for the Word is God’s representative, to teach and inform us of actual verities.

PART 25

¹ Chapter XXV.—The Manichæan Abstinence from Living Things Ridiculous; Their Madness in Abhorring Marriage; The Mythology of the Giants; Too Allegorical an Exposition. ² They abstain also from living things. If, indeed, the reason of their abstinence were other than it is, it ought not to be too curiously investigated. But if they do so for this reason, that the divine virtue is more or less absent or present to them, this their meaning is ridiculous. For if plants be more material, how is it in accordance with reason to use that which is inferior for food and sustenance? or, if there be more of the divine virtue in them, how are things of this sort useful as food, when the soul’s faculty of nourishing and making increase is more corporeal? Now in that they abstain from marriage and the rites of Venus, fearing lest by the succession of the race the divine virtue should dwell more in matter, I wonder how in thinking so they allow of themselves? For if neither the providence of God suffices, both by generations and by those things which are always and in the same manner existent, to separate off the divine virtue from matter, what can the cunning and subtlety of Manichæus effect for that purpose? For assuredly by no giant’s co-operation does assistance come to God, in order by the removal of generations to make the retreat of the divine virtue from matter quick and speedy. But what the poets say about the giants is manifestly a fable. For those who lay it down about these, bring forward such matters in allegories, by a species of fable hiding the majesty of their discourse;

³ as, for instance, when the Jewish history relates that angels came down to hold intercourse with the daughters of men; for this saying signifies that the nutritive powers of the soul descended from heaven to earth. But the poets who say that they, when they had emerged in full armour from the earth,

perished immediately after they stirred up rebellion against the gods, in order that they might insinuate the frail and quickly-perishing constitution of the body, adorn their poetry in this way for the sake of refreshing the soul by the strangeness of the occurrence. But these, understanding nothing of all this, wheresoever they can get hold of a paralogism from whatsoever quarter it comes, greedily seize on it as a God-send, and strive with all their arts to overturn truth by any means.

PART 26

1 Chapter XXVI.—The Much-Talked-of Fire of the Manichæans; That Fire Matter Itself. 2 That fire, endowed indeed with the power of burning, yet possessing no light, which is outside the world, in what region has it place? For if it is in the world, why does the world hitherto continue safe? For if at some time or other it is to destroy it, by approaching it, now also it is conjoined with it. But if it be apart from it, as it were on high in its own region, what will hereafter happen to make it descend upon the world? Or in what way will it leave its own place, and by what necessity and violence? And what substance of fire can be conceived without fuel, and how can what is moist serve as fuel to it, unless what is rather physiologically said about this does not fall within the province of our present disquisition? But this is quite manifest from what has been said. For the fire existing outside the world is just that which they call matter, since the sun and the moon, being the purest of the pure, by their divine virtue, are separate and distinct from that fire, no part of them being left in it. This fire is matter itself, absolutely and per se, entirely removed from all admixture with the divine virtue. Wherefore when the world has been emptied of all the divine virtue which is opposed to it, and again a fire of this sort shall be left remaining, how then shall the fire either destroy anything, or be consumed by it?

3 For, from that which is like, I do not see in what way corruption is to take place. For what matter will become when the divine virtue has been separated from it, this it was before that the divine virtue was commingled with it. If indeed matter is to perish when it is bereft of the divine virtue, why did it not perish before it came in contact with the divine virtue, or any creative energy? Was it in order that matter might successively perish, and do this ad infinitum? And what is the use of this? For that which had not place from the first volition, how shall this have place from one following? or what reason is there for God to put off things which, not even in the case of a man,

appears to be well? For as regards those who deliberate about what is impossible, this is said to happen to them, that they do not wish for that which is possible. But if nothing else, they speak of God transcending substance, and bring Him forward as some new material, and that not such as intelligent men always think to be joined with Him, but that which investigation discovers either to be not existing at all, or to be the extreme of all things, and which can with difficulty be conceived of by the human mind. For this fire, devoid of light, is it of more force than matter, which is to be left desolate by divine virtue, or is it of less?

⁴ And if it is of less, how will it overcome that which is of more? but if it is of more, it will be able to bring it back to itself, being of the same nature; yet will it not destroy it, as neither does the Nile swallow up the streams that are divided off from it.

Derision of Gentile Philosophers

HERMIAS THE PHILOSOPHER

2nd–5th century

Author of a short satire on pagan philosophers; his date is uncertain.

DERISION OF GENTILE PHILOSOPHERS

HERMIAS THE PHILOSOPHER — DERISION OF GENTILE PHILOSOPHERS.

[Translated by J.A.Giles, 1857] 1. PAUL the blessed apostle, my beloved brethren, writing to the Corinthians who inhabit Laconian Greece, spake saying, "The wisdom of this world is folly in the sight of God" [1 Cor. iii, 19], and he said not amiss. For it seems to me to have taken its beginning from the rebellion of the angels ; for which cause the philosophers put forth their doctrines, saying things that neither sound the same, nor mean the same as one another. For some of them say that the soul is fire, like Democritus; air, like the Stoics; some say it is the mind; and some say it is motion, as Herac-litus ; some say it is exhalation; some an influence flowing from the stars ; some say it is number in motion, as Pythagoras; some say it is generative water, as Hippo; some say an element from elements; some say it is harmony, as Dinarchus; some say the blood, as Critias; some the breath; some say unity, as Pythagoras; and so the ancients say contrary things. How many statements are there about these things ! how many attempts ! how many also of sophists who carry on a strife rather than seek the truth!

2. Be it so then: they differ about the soul, but have [194 pronounced other things about it in unison: and of others, one man calls pleasure its good, another its evil, and again a third man, its middle state between good and evil. But its nature some call immortal, some mortal, and others say that it remains for a time, but others that it becomes brutalised, others divide it into atoms, others embody it three times, others assign to it periods of three thousand years. For though they do not live even an hundred years, they talk of three thousand years about to come. What then must we term these

things? They seem to me, to be a prodigy, or folly, or madness, or rebellion, or all these together. If they have found out anything true, let them agree together about it, or let them join together, and I then will gladly listen to them. But, if they distract the soul, and draw it, one into a different nature, another into a different being, changing one kind of matter for another; I confess I am harassed by the ebbing and flowing of the subject. At one time I am immortal and rejoice; at another time again I become mortal and weep. Anew I am dissolved into atoms: I become water, and I become air: I become fire, and then after a little, neither air, nor fire: he makes me a beast, he makes me a fish. Again then I have dolphins for my brothers;

but when I look on myself, I am frightened at my body, and I know not how I shall call it, man, or dog, or wolf, or bull, or bird, or snake, or serpent, or chimaera; for I am changed by the philosophers into all the beasts, of the land, of the sea, having wings, of many forms, wild or tame, dumb or vocal, brute or reasoning: I swim, I fly, I rise aloft, I crawl, I run, I sit. But here is Empedocles, and he makes me a stump of a tree. 3. Since then it is not possible for the philosophers by agreeing together to find out the soul of man, they can scarcely be able to declare the truth about the gods or the universe. For they have this audacity, that I may not call it infatuation. For those who are not able to discover their own soul, seek into the nature of the gods themselves; and those who do not know their own body, busy themselves | 195 about the nature of the world. In truth they wholly oppose one another about the principles of nature. When Anaxagoras catches me, he teaches me thus: The beginning of all things is mind, and this is the cause and regulator of all things, and gives arrangement to things unarranged, and motion to things unmoved, and distinction to things mixed, and order to things disordered. Anaxagoras, who says these words, is my friend, and I bow to his doctrine. But against him rise up Melissus and Parmenides. Parmenides indeed, in his poetical works, proclaims that being is one, and everlasting, and endless, and immoveable, and in every way alike. Again then, I know not why I change to this doctrine: Parmenides has driven Anaxagoras out of my mind. But when I am on the point of thinking that I have now a firm doctrine, Anaximenes, catching hold of me, cries out, "But I tell you, everything is air, and this air, thickening and settling, becomes water and air; rarefying and spreading, it becomes aether and fire: but returning into its own nature,

it becomes thin air: but if also it becomes condensed, (says he) it is changed." And thus again I pass over to this opinion of his, and cherish Anaximenes.

4. But Empedocles stands opposite chafing, and crying aloud from Aetna . The principles of all things are enmity and friendship, the one drawing together, the other separating; and their strife makes all things. But I define these to be, like and unlike, boundless and having bounds, things eternal, and things made. Well done, Empedocles; I follow you now even up to the craters of fire. But on the other hand stands Protagoras, and draws me aside, saying, Man is the term and arbitrement of things, and those are things that fall under sensation: but those which do not so fall are not in the forms of being. Enticed by Protagoras with this description, I am pleased, because every thing or at least the greatest part is left to man. But on the other hand Thales nods the truth to me, defining water to be the principle of all, and that all things are formed out of the moist, and are [196 resolved into the moist,, and the earth rides over the water. Why then should I not listen to Thales the elder of the Ionians? But his countryman Anaximander himself says that eternal motion is an older principle than moisture, and that by it some things are generated, and some things perish. And so let Anaximander be our guide.

5. And is not Archelaus of good repute, who declares that the principles of the whole are heat and cold ? But again in this also the grandiloquous Plato does not agree; saying that the principles are God, and matter, and example. Now then I am persuaded. For how shall I not trust a philosopher who made the chariot of Jupiter ? But behind stands his disciple Aristotle, envying his master for his coach-making. He lays down other principles, to do, and to suffer; and that the active principle is the aether, which is acted on by nothing, but the passive has four qualities, drought, moisture, heat, and cold: for by the change of these into one another all things are produced and perish. We were now tired, changing up and down with the doctrines, but I will rest on the opinion of Aristotle, and let no doctrine henceforth trouble me.

6. But what can I do ? For old men more ancient than these hamstring my soul: Pherecydes saying that the principles are Jupiter, and Tellus , and Saturn —Jupiter the aether, Tellus the Earth, and Saturn Time. The aether is the agent, but the earth is passive, and Time in which all created things are comprised. These old men have contentions with one another. For Leucippus, deeming all these things madness, says that the principles are boundless, mo-

tionless, and infinitesimal ; and that the lighter parts going up, become fire and air, whilst the heavier parts, subsiding, become water and earth. How long am I taught such things, learning nothing true? Unless else Democritus will set me free from error, declaring that the principles are Existence and Non-existence, and that Existence is full, but Non-existence is empty ; but the full affects all things by change or by order in the empty. Perhaps I might listen to good Democritus, and should like [197 to laugh with him, did not Heraclitus persuade me otherwise, at the same time weeping and saying, Fire is the principle of all things: it has two states of being, thinness and thickness: the one active, the other passive, the one blending, the other separating. This is enough for me, and I should already be drunk with so many principles: but Epicurus calls me away from thence also, by no means to revile his good doctrine, of atoms and of emptiness. For by the varied and manifold interweaving of these, all things are born and perish.

7. I do not contradict you, my best of men, Epicurus. But Cleanthes , raising his head from the well, laughs at your doctrine. And myself also derive from him the true principles, God and matter; and that earth changes into water, and water into air; that the air floats, and that the fire comes to the parts near the earth, that the soul extends through all the world, of which we also, sharing a portion, have the breath of life. Which things then being thus many, another multitude throngs me out of Libya, Carneades, and Clitomachus, and all their followers, treading down all the doctrines of the others, and themselves declaring plainly, that all things are incomprehensible, and that a false imagination always hangs about the truth. What then will become of me, after having toiled so long a time? How can I deliver forth so many doctrines from my mind? For if nothing be comprehensible, truth is gone from men, and vaunted philosophy throws a shade rather than conveys a knowledge of the things that be.

8. But lo, from the old school, Pythagoras and his fellows, grave and silent men, deliver to me other doctrines, as mysteries, and among them this great and ineffable one, HE HATH SAID. The principle of all things is unity, but from its forms and numbers are produced the elements, and the number and form and measure of each of these is thus somehow declared. Fire is completed out of four-and-twenty right-angled triangles, being contained by four equilateral ones. Each equilateral one is composed of six triangles, whence also they liken it to a pyramid. But air is completed by forty-eight

triangles, 198 being contained by eight equilateral ones. But it is likened to an octahedron, which is contained by eight equilateral triangles, each of which is divided into six right-angled ones, so that they are forty-eight in all. But water being contained by an hundred and twenty, is likened also to a figure having twenty sides, which indeed consists of twenty-six equal and equilateral triangles and But the aether is completed of twelve equilateral pentagons, and is similar to a figure having twelve sides, Earth is completed of forty-eight triangles, and is also contained by six equilateral triangles, and is like a cube. For the cube is contained by six squares, each of which extends to four triangles; so that all together are twenty-four.

9. Thus Pythagoras measures the world. But I again, becoming inspired, despise my home, and my country, and my wife, and my children, and I no longer care for them, but mount up into the aether itself, and taking the cubit from Pythagoras, begin to measure the fire. For Jupiter's measuring it is not enough for me. Unless also the great animal, the great body, the great soul, MYSELF, mount into heaven, and measure the aether, the rule of Jupiter is gone. But when I have measured it, and Jupiter has learnt from me, how many angles fire has, I again go down from heaven, and eating olives, and figs and cabbage, I make the best of my way to the water, and with cubit, and digit and half-digit, measure the watery being, and calculate its depth, that I may also teach Neptune, how much sea he rules over. I pass over all the earth in one day, collecting its number and its measure and its forms. For I am persuaded that, such and so great a person as I am, of all things in the world, I shall not make a mistake of a single span. But I know both the number of the stars, and of the fishes, and of the wild beasts, and placing the world in a balance, I can easily learn its weight. About these things then my soul has been earnest until now, to have rule over all things.

10. But Epicurus, stooping towards me, says, "You have 199 measured one world, my friend; there are many and endless worlds ." I am compelled then again to speak of many heavens, other aethers, and many of them. Come then, without more delay, having victualled yourself for a few days' travel into the worlds of Epicurus. I easily pass its bounds, Tethys and Oceanus. But when I have entered into a new world, and as it were into a new city, I measure the whole in a few days. And from thence I cross back into the world again, then into a fourth, and a fifth, and a tenth, and an hundredth, and a thousandth, and where will it end ? For all things already are the darkness of

ignorance to me, and black error, and endless wandering, and unprofitable fancy, and ignorance not to be comprehended: unless else I intend to number the very atoms also, out of which such great worlds have arisen, that I may leave nothing unexamined, especially of things so necessary and useful, from which both houses and cities prosper. These things have I gone through, wishing to point out the opposition which is in their doctrines, and how their examination of things will go on to infinity and no limit, for their end is inexplicable and useless, being confirmed neither by one manifest fact, nor by one sound argument.

[Note to the online text: numbers have been added to the end notes so that they can be inserted in the text as hyperlinks] 1. Page 193, line 5. rebellion of the angels] This opinion was held by many other philosophers, and is refuted by Clemens Alexandrinus, Strom. i, pag. 310, and vi, pag. 647. It is a well-known eastern notion, and has been beautifully embodied in the writings of some of our modern poets. 2. Line 10. Heraclitus] The editors think these names of the philosophers were originally side-notes, and have been copied by mistake into the text. The Oxford editor says that the name of Heraclitus is here misplaced, and should come after exhalation, in the next line. See Plut. de Placit. Philosoph. iv, 3. [269 3. Page 194, line 9. three thousand years] In allusion to Plato's views about the three periods of three thousand years. See Phaedo, p. 248.

4. Line 21. a fish] Empedocles and Plato seem to be here meant. See Tertullian de Anima, xxxii, and Plato's Timaeus, sub fin. 5. Page 195, line 22. Empedocles] It is said that Empedocles, in order that he might utterly disappear from the sight of men and be thought immortal, leaped into the crater of Mount Etna, but that one of his shoes was cast up with the lava, and detected his design. 6. Page 196, line 2. elder] tw|- presbute/tw| tw-n 'Iw&nwn. 7. Line 28. Jupiter and Tellus, &c.] In Greek Zeus, Chthonia, and Kronos: we use the equivalent names of the corresponding Roman deities. 8. Line 35. empty] The doctrine of the plenum and the vacuum, as it is generally termed. I prefer the plain English words, full and empty. 9. Page 197, line 6. Epicurus] The reader must be told that the doctrine of unrestrained enjoyment was promulgated, not by this eminent philosopher, but by his disciples after him, who took a corollary from his system, as the exponent of the system itself.

10. Line 11. Cleanthes] the successor of Zeno as head of the stoic school, famous for his sobriety---a water-drinker. 11. Page 198, line 7. triangle, &c.] Here is some omission or corruption in the Greek. Worth, the Oxford editor of Hermias, has tried to reconstruct the whole passage: but it is an unfruitful labour to follow him; the general idea of the doctrine is as obvious as it is absurd. 12. Page 199, line 1. endless worlds] The ancients were not wholly without a knowledge of the wonders of astronomy, and the immense number of the heavenly bodies; though it is generally believed that it was nothing in comparison with the revelations of modern science made by means of the telescope.

A Canticle of Mar Jacob the Teacher on Edessa

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

A CANTICLE OF MAR JACOB THE TEACHER ON EDESSA

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. A Canticle of Mar Jacob the Teacher on Edessa. Edessa sent to Christ by an epistle to come to her and enlighten her. On behalf of all the peoples did she make intercession to Him that He would leave Zion, which hated Him, and come to the peoples, who loved Him. She despatched a messenger to Him, and begged of Him to enter into friendship with her. By the righteous king she made intercession to Him, that He would depart from the Jewish people, and towards the other peoples direct His burden. From among all kings one wise king did the daughter of the peoples find. Ambassador she made him. To her Lord she sent by him: Come Thou unto me; I will forget in Thee all idols and carved images. The harlot heard the report of Him from afar, as she was standing in the street, going astray with idols, playing the wench with carved images. She loved, she much desired Him, when He was far away, and begged Him to admit her into His chamber.

² Let the much-desired Bridegroom kiss me: with the kisses of His mouth let me be blessed. I have heard of Him from afar: may I see Him near; and may I place my lips upon His, and be delighted by seeing Him with mine eyes. Thy breasts are better to me than wine: for the fragrance of Thy sweetness is life for evermore. With Thy milk shall I be nourished; with Thy fragrance shall I grow sweet from the smoke of idols, which with its rank odour did make me fetid. Draw me after Thee into Thy fold: for I am a sheep gone astray in the world. After Thee do I run, and Thy converse do I seek: that in me may be completed that number of a hundred, by means of a lost one

which is found. Let Gabriel rejoice and be exceeding glad, with the company of all the angels, in Thee, the Good Shepherd, who on Thy shoulders didst carry the maimed sheep, that that number of a hundred might be preserved.

³ Thy love is better than wine; than the face of the upright Thy affection. By wine let us be reminded of Thee, how by the cup of Thy blood Thou didst grant us to obtain new life, and the upright did celebrate Thy love. A church am I from among the peoples, and I have loved the Only-begotten who was sent by God: whereas His betrothed hated Him, I have loved Him; and by the hands of Abgar the Black do I beseech Him to come to me and visit me. Black am I, yet comely. Ye daughters of Zion, blameless is your envy, seeing that the Son of the Glorious One hath espoused me, to bring me into His chamber. Even when I was hateful, He loved me, for He is able to make me fairer than water. Black was I in sins, but I am comely: for I have repented and turned me. I have put away in baptism that hateful hue, for He hath washed me in His innocent blood who is the Saviour of all creatures.

⁴ Here end the Extracts from the Canticle on Edessa.

Acts of Sharbil

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

ACTS OF SHARBIL

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. Acts of Sharbil, Who Was a Priest of Idols, and Was Converted to the Confession of Christianity in Christ. In the fifteenth year of the Sovereign Ruler Trajan Cæsar, and in the third year of King Abgar the Seventh, which is the year 416 of the kingdom of Alexander king of the Greeks, and in the priesthood of Sharbil and Barsamya, Trajan Cæsar commanded the governors of the countries under his dominion that sacrifices and libations should be increased in all the cities of their administration, and that those who did not sacrifice should be seized and delivered over to stripes, and to the tearing of combs, and to bitter inflictions of all kinds of tortures, and should afterwards receive the punishment of the sword.

² Now, when the command arrived at the town of Edessa of the Parthians, there was a great festival, on the eighth of Nisan, on the third day of the week: the whole city was gathered together by the great altar which was in the middle of the town, opposite the Record office, all the gods having been brought together, and decorated, and sitting in honour, both Nebu and Bel together with their fellows. And all the priests were offering incense of spices and libations, and an odour of sweetness was diffusing itself around, and sheep and oxen were being slaughtered, and the sound of the harp and the drum was heard in the whole town. And Sharbil was chief and ruler of all the priests; and he was honoured above all his fellows, and was clad in splendid and magnificent vestments; and a headband embossed with figures of gold was set upon his head; and at the bidding of his word everything that he ordered was done. And Abgar the king, son of the gods, was standing at the head of the people. And they obeyed Sharbil, because he drew nearer to all

the gods than any of his fellows, and as being the one who according to that which he had heard from the gods returned an answer to every man.

³ And, while these things were being done by the command of the king, Barsamya, the bishop of the Christians, went up to Sharbil, he and Tiridath the elder and Shalula the deacon; and he said to Sharbil, the high priest: The King Christ, to whom belong heaven and earth, will demand an account at thy hands of all these souls against whom thou art sinning, and whom thou art misleading, and turning away from the God of verity and of truth to idols that are made and deceitful, which are not able to do anything with their hands—moreover also thou hast no pity on thine own soul, which is destitute of the true life of God; and thou declarest to this people that the dumb idols talk with thee; and, as if thou wert listening to something from them, thou puttest thine ear near to one and another of them, and sayest to this people: The god Nebu bade me say to you, “On account of your sacrifices and oblations I cause peace in this your country; and: Bel saith, “I cause great plenty in your land; and those who hear this from thee do not discern that thou art greatly deceiving them—because “they have a mouth and speak not, and they have eyes and see not with them; it is ye who bear up them, and not they who bear up you, as ye suppose; and it is ye who set tables before them, and not they who feed you.

⁴ And now be persuaded by me touching that which I say to thee and advise thee. If thou be willing to hearken to me, abandon idols made, and worship God the Maker of all things, and His Son Jesus Christ. Do not, because He put on a body and became man and was stretched out on the cross of death, be ashamed of Him and refuse to worship Him: for, all these things which He endured—it was for the salvation of men and for their deliverance. For this One who put on a body is God, the Son of God, Son of the essence of His Father, and Son of the nature of Him who begat Him: for He is the adorable brightness of His Godhead, and is the glorious manifestation of His majesty, and together with His Father He existed from eternity and from everlasting, His arm, and His right hand, and His power, and His wisdom, and His strength, and the living Spirit which is from Him, the Expiator and Sanctifier of all His worshippers. These are the things which Palut taught us, with whom thy venerable self was acquainted; and thou knowest that Palut was the disciple of Addæus the apostle. Abgar the king also, who was older than this Abgar, who himself worshippeth idols as well as thou, he too be-

lieved in the King Christ, the Son of Him whom thou callest Lord of all the gods.

5 For it is forbidden to Christians to worship anything that is made, and is a creature, and in its nature is not God: even as ye worship idols made by men, who themselves also are made and created. Be persuaded, therefore, by these things which I have said to thee, which things are the belief of the Church: for I know that all this population are looking to thee, and I am well assured that, if thou be persuaded, many also will be persuaded with thee.

6 Sharbil said to him: Very acceptable to me are these thy words which thou hast spoken before me; yea, exceedingly acceptable are they to me. But, as for me, I know that I am outcast from all these things, and there is no longer any remedy for me. And, now that hope is cut off from me, why weariest thou thyself about a man dead and buried, for whose death there is no hope of resurrection? For I am slain by paganism, and am become a dead man, the property of the Evil One: in sacrifices and libations of imposture have I consumed all the days of my life. And, when Barsamya the bishop heard these things, he fell down before his feet, and said to him: There is hope for those who turn, and healing for those that are wounded. I myself will be surety to thee for the abundant mercies of the Son Christ: that He will pardon thee all the sins which thou hast committed against Him, in that thou hast worshipped and honoured His creatures instead of Himself. For that Gracious One, who extended Himself on the cross of death, will not withhold His grace from the souls that comply with His precepts and take refuge in His kindness which has been displayed towards us. Like as He did towards the robber, so is He able to do to thee, and also to those who are like thee.

7 Sharbil said to him: Thou, like a skilful physician, who suffers pain from the pain of the afflicted, hast done well in that thou hast been concerned about me. But at present, because it is the festival to-day of this people, of every one of them, I cannot go down with thee to-day to the church. Depart thou, and go down with honour; and to-morrow at night I will come down to thee: I too have henceforth renounced for myself the gods made with hands, and I will confess the Lord Christ, the Maker of all men. And the next day Sharbil arose and went down to Barsamya by night, he and Babai his sister; and he was received by the whole church. And he said to them: Offer for me prayer and supplication, that Christ may forgive me all the sins that I have committed against Him in all this long course of

years. And, because they were in dread of the persecutors, they arose and gave him the seal of salvation, whilst he confessed the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

⁸ And, when all the city had heard that he was gone down to the church, there began to be a consternation among the multitude; and they arose and went down to him, and saw him clad in the fashion of the Christians. And he said to them: May the Son Christ forgive me all the sins that I have committed against you, and all in which I made you think that the gods talked with me, whereas they did not talk; and, forasmuch as I have been to you a cause of abomination, may I now be to you a cause of good: instead of worshipping, as formerly, idols made with hands, may ye henceforth worship God the Maker. And, when they had heard these things, there remained with him a great congregation of men and of women; and Labu also, and Hafsai, and Barcalba, and Avida, chief persons of the city. They all said to Sharbil: Henceforth we also renounce that which thou hast renounced, and we confess the King Christ, whom thou hast confessed.

⁹ But Lysanias, the judge of the country, when he heard that Sharbil had done this, sent by night and carried him off from the church. And there went up with him many Christians. And he sat down, to hear him and to judge him, before the altar which is in the middle of the town, where he used to sacrifice to the gods. And he said to him: Wherefore hast thou renounced the gods, whom thou didst worship, and to whom thou didst sacrifice, and to whom thou wast made chief of the priests, and lo! dost today confess Christ, whom thou didst formerly deny? For see how those Christians, to whom thou art gone, renounce not that which they have held, like as thou hast renounced that in which thou wast born. If thou art assured of the gods, how is it that thou hast renounced them this day? But, if on the contrary thou art not assured, as thou declarest concerning them, how is it that thou didst once sacrifice to them and worship them?

¹⁰ Sharbil said: When I was blinded in my mind, I worshipped that which I knew not; but to-day, inasmuch as I have obtained the clear eyes of the mind, it is henceforth impossible that I should stumble at carved stones, or that I should any longer be the cause of stumbling to others. For it is a great disgrace to him whose eyes are open, if he goes and falls into the pit of destruction. The judge said: Because thou hast been priest of the venerable gods, and hast been partaker of the mystery of those whom the mighty emperors

worship, I will have patience with thee, in order that thou mayest be persuaded by me, and not turn away from the service of the gods; but, if on the contrary thou shalt not be persuaded by me, by those same gods whom thou hast renounced I swear that, even as on a man that is a murderer, so will I inflict tortures on thee, and will avenge on thee the wrong done to the gods, whom thou hast rebelled against and renounced, and also the insult which thou hast poured upon them; nor will I leave untried any kind of tortures which I will not inflict on thee; and, like as thine honour formerly was great, so will I make thine ignominy great this day.

¹¹ Sharbil said: I too, on my part, am not content that thou shouldest look upon me as formerly, when I worshipped gods made with hands; but look thou upon me to-day and question me as a Christian man renouncing idols and confessing the King Christ. The judge said: How is it that thou art not afraid of the emperors, nor moved to shame by those who are listening to thy trial, that thou sayest, "I am a Christian"? But promise that thou wilt sacrifice to the gods, according to thy former custom, so that thy honour may be great, as formerly—lest I make to tremble at thee all those who have believed like thyself. Sharbil said: Of the King of kings I am afraid, but at any king of earth I tremble not, nor yet at thy threats towards me, which lo! thou utterest against the worshippers of Christ: whom I confessed yesterday, and lo! I am brought to trial for His sake to-day, like as He Himself was brought to trial for the sake of sinners like me.

¹² The judge said: Although thou have no pity on thyself, still I will have pity on thee, and refrain from cutting off those hands of thine with which thou hast placed incense before the gods, and from stopping with thy blood those ears of thine which have heard their mysteries, and thy tongue which has interpreted and explained to us their secret things. Of those gods lo! I am afraid, and I have pity on thee. But, if thou continue thus, those gods be my witnesses that I will have no pity on thee! Sharbil said: As a man who art afraid of the emperors and tremblest at idols, have thou no pity on me. For, as for me, I know not what thou sayest: therefore also is my mind not shaken or terrified by those things which thou sayest. For by thy judgments shall all they escape from the judgment to come who do not worship that which is not God in its own nature.

¹³ The judge said: Let him be scourged with thongs, because he has dared to answer me thus, and has resisted the command of the emperors, and has

not appreciated the honour which the gods conferred on him: inasmuch as, lo! he has renounced them. And he was scourged by ten men, who laid hold on him, according to the command of the judge. Sharbil said: Thou art not aware of the scourging of justice in that world which is to come. For thou wilt cease, and thy judgments also will pass away; but justice will not pass away, nor will its retributions come to an end. The judge said: Thou art so intoxicated with this same Christianity, that thou dost not even know before whom thou art judged, and by whom it is that thou art scourged—even by those who formerly held thee in honour, and paid adoration to thy priesthood in the gods. Why dost thou hate honour, and love this ignominy? For, although thou speakest contrary to the law, yet I myself cannot turn aside from the laws of the emperors.

¹⁴ Sharbil said: As thou takest heed not to depart from the laws of the emperors, and if moreover thou depart from them thou knowest what command they will give concerning thee, so do I also take heed not to decline from the law of Him who said, “Thou shalt not worship any image, nor any likeness;” and therefore will I not sacrifice to idols made with hands: for long enough was the time in which I sacrificed to them, when I was in ignorance. The judge said: Bring not upon thee punishment in addition to the punishment which thou hast already brought upon thee. Enough is it for thee to have said, “I will not sacrifice:” do not dare to insult the gods, by calling them manufactured idols whom even the emperors honour. Sharbil said: But, if on behalf of the emperors, who are far away and not near at hand and not conscious of those who treat their commands with contempt, thou biddest me sacrifice, how is it that on behalf of idols, who lo! are present and are seen, but see not, thou biddest me sacrifice? Why, hereby thou hast declared before all thy attendants that, because they have a mouth and speak not, lo! thou art become a pleader for them: dumb idols “to whom their makers shall be like,” and “every one that trusteth upon them” shall be like thee.

¹⁵ The judge said: It was not for this that thou wast called before me—that, instead of paying the honour which is due, thou shouldst despise the emperors. But draw near to the gods and sacrifice, and have pity on thyself, thou self-despiser! Sharbil said: Why should it be requisite for thee to ask me many questions, after that which I have said to thee: “I will not sacrifice”? Thou hast called me a self-despiser? But would that from my childhood I had had this mind and had thus despised myself, which was perishing! The judge

said: Hang him up, and tear him with combs on his sides.—And while he was thus torn he cried aloud and said: It is for the sake of Christ, who has secretly caused His light to arise upon the darkness of my mind. And, when he had thus spoken, the judge commanded again that he should be torn with combs on his face.

16 Sharbil said: It is better that thou shouldest inflict tortures upon me for not sacrificing, than that I should be judged there for having sacrificed to the work of men's hands. The judge said: Let his body be bent backwards, and let straps be tied to his hands and his feet; and, when he has been bent backwards, let him be scourged on his belly. And they scourged him in this manner, according to the command of the judge. Then he commanded that he should go up to the prison, and that he should be cast into a dark dungeon. And the executioners, and the Christians who had come up with him from the church, carried him, because he was not able to walk upon his feet in consequence of his having been bent backwards. And he was in the gaol many days. But on the second of Ilul, on the third day of the week, the judge arose and went down to his judgment-hall by night; and the whole body of his attendants was with him; and he commanded the keeper of the prison, and they brought him before him. And the judge said to him: This long while hast thou been in prison: what has been thy determination concerning those things on which thou wast questioned before me? Dost thou consent to minister to the gods according to thy former custom, agreeably to the command of the emperors?

17 Sharbil said: This has been my determination in the prison, that that with which I began before thee, I will finish even to the last; nor will I play false with my word. For I will not again confess idols, which I have renounced; nor will I renounce the King Christ, whom I have confessed. The judge said: Hang him up by his right hand, because he has withdrawn it from the gods that he may not again offer incense with it, until his hand with which he ministered to the gods be dislocated, because he persists in this saying of his. And, while he was suspended by his hand, they asked him and said to him: Dost thou consent to sacrifice to the gods? But he was not able to return them an answer, on account of the dislocation of his arm. And the judge commanded, and they loosed him and took him down. But he was not able to bring his arm up to his side, until the executioners pressed it and brought it up to his side.

18 The judge said: Put on incense, and go whithersoever thou wilt, and no one shall compel thee to be a priest again. But, if thou wilt not, I will show thee tortures bitterer than these. Sharbil said: As for gods that made not the heavens and the earth, may they perish from under these heavens! But thou, menace me not with words of threatening; but, instead of words, show upon me the deeds of threatening, that I hear thee not again making mention of the detestable name of gods! The judge said: Let him be branded with the brand of bitter fire between his eyes and upon his cheeks. And the executioners did so, until the smell of the branding reeked forth in the midst of the judgment-hall: but he refused to sacrifice. Sharbil said: Thou hast heard for thyself from me, when I said to thee “Thou art not aware of the smoke of the roasting of the fire which is prepared for those who, like thee, confess idols made by hands, and deny the living God, after thy fashion.”

19 The judge said: Who taught thee all these things, that thou shouldest speak before me thus—a man who was a friend of the gods and an enemy of Christ, whereas, lo! thou art become his advocate. Sharbil said: Christ whom I have confessed, He it is that hath taught me to speak thus. But there needeth not that I should be His advocate, for His own mercies are eloquent advocates for guilty ones like me, and these will avail to plead on my behalf in the day when the sentences shall be eternal. The judge said: Let him be hanged up, and let him be torn with combs upon his former wounds; also let salt and vinegar be rubbed into the wounds upon his sides. Then he said to him: Renounce not the gods whom thou didst formerly confess. Sharbil said: Have pity on me and spare me again from saying that there be gods, and powers, and fates, and nativities. On the contrary, I confess one God, who made the heavens, and the earth, and the seas, and all that is therein; and the Son who is from Him, the King Christ.

20 The judge said: It is not about this that thou art questioned before me—viz.: what is the belief of the Christians which thou hast confessed; but this is what I said to thee, “Renounce not those gods to whom thou wast made priest.” Sharbil said: Where is that wisdom of thine and of the emperors of whom thou makest thy boast, that ye worship the work of the hands of the artificers and confess them, whilst the artificers themselves, who made the idols, ye insult by the burdens and imposts which ye lay upon them? The artificer standeth up at thy presence, to do honour to thee; and thou standest up in the presence of the work of the artificer, and dost honour it and wor-

ship it. The judge said: Thou art not the man to call others to account for these things; but from thyself a strict account is demanded, as to the cause for which thou hast renounced the gods, and refusest to offer them incense like thy fellow-priests.

²¹ Sharbil said: Death on account of this is true life: those who confess the King Christ, He also will confess before His glorious Father. The judge said: Let lighted candles be brought, and let them be passed round about his face and about the sides of his wounds. And they did so a long while. Sharbil said: It is well that thou burnest me with this fire, that so I may be delivered from "that fire which is not quenched, and the worm that dieth not," which is threatened to those who worship things made instead of the Maker: for it is forbidden to the Christians to honour or worship anything except the nature of Him who is God Most High. For that which is made and is created is designed to be a worshipper of its Maker, and is not to be worshipped along with its Creator, as thou supposest.

²² The governor said: It is not this for which the emperors have ordered me to demand an account at thy hands, whether there be judgment and the rendering of an account after the death of men; nor yet about this do I care, whether that which is made is to be honoured or not to be honoured. What the emperors have commanded me is this: that, whosoever will not sacrifice to the gods and offer incense to them, I should employ against him stripes, and combs, and sharp swords. Sharbil said: The kings of this world are conscious of this world only; but the King of all kings, He hath revealed and shown to us that there is another world, and a judgment in reserve, in which a recompense will be made, on the one hand to those who have served God, and on the other to those who have not served Him nor confessed Him. Therefore do I cry aloud, that I will not again sacrifice to idols, nor will I offer oblations to devils, nor will I do honour to demons!

²³ The judge said: Let nails of iron be driven in between the eyes of the insolent fellow, and let him go to that world which he is looking forward to, like a fanatic. And the executioners did so, the sound of the driving in of the nails being heard as they were being driven in sharply. Sharbil said: Thou hast driven in nails between my eyes, even as nails were driven into the hands of the glorious Architect of the creation, and by reason of this did all orders of the creation tremble and quake at that season. For these tortures which lo! thou art inflicting on me are nothing in view of that judgment which is to

come. For those “whose ways are always firm,” because “they have not the judgment of God before their eyes,” and who on this account do not even confess that God exists—neither will He confess them.

²⁴ The judge said: Thou sayest in words that there is a judgment; but I will show thee in deeds: so that, instead of that judgment which is to come, thou mayest tremble and be afraid of this one which is before thine eyes, in which lo! thou art involved, and not multiply thy speech before me. Sharbil said: Whosoever is resolved to set God before his eyes in secret, God will also be at his right hand; and I too am not afraid of thy threats of tortures, with which thou dost menace me and seek to make me afraid. The judge said: Let Christ, whom thou hast confessed, deliver thee from all the tortures which I have inflicted on thee, and am about further to inflict on thee; and let Him show His deliverance towards thee openly, and save thee out of my hands. Sharbil said: This is the true deliverance of Christ imparted to me—this secret power which He has given me to endure all the tortures thou art inflicting on me, and whatsoever it is settled in thy mind still further to inflict upon me; and, although thou hast plainly seen it to be so, thou hast refused to credit my word.

²⁵ The judge said: Take him away from before me, and let him be hanged upon a beam the contrary way, head downwards; and let him be beaten with whips while he is hanging. And the executioners did so to him, at the door of the judgment-hall. Then the governor commanded, and they brought him in before him. And he said to him: Sacrifice to the gods, and do the will of the emperors, thou priest that hatest honour and lovest ignominy instead! Sharbil said: Why dost thou again repeat thy words, and command me to sacrifice, after the many times that thou hast heard from me that I will not sacrifice again? For it is not any compulsion on the part of the Christians that has kept me back from sacrifices, but the truth they hold: this it is that has delivered me from the error of paganism. The judge said: Let him be put into a chest of iron like a murderer, and let him be scourged with thongs like a malefactor.

²⁶ And the executioners did so, until there remained not a sound place on him. Sharbil said: As for these tortures, which thou supposest to be bitter, out of the midst of their bitterness will spring up for me fountains of deliverance and mercy in the day of the eternal sentences. The governor said: Let small round pieces of wood be placed between the fingers of his hands, and let

these be squeezed upon them vehemently. And they did so to him, until the blood came out from under the nails of his fingers. Sharbil said: If thine eye be not satisfied with the tortures of the body, add still further to its tortures whatsoever thou wilt. The judge said: Let the fingers of his hands be loosed, and make him sit upon the ground; and bind his hands upon his knees, and thrust a piece of wood under his knees, and let it pass over the bands of his hands, and hang him up by his feet, thus bent, head downwards; and let him be scourged with thongs.

27 And they did so to him. Sharbil said: They cannot conquer who fight against God, nor may they be overcome whose confidence is God; and therefore do I say, that “neither fire nor sword, nor death nor life, nor height nor depth, can separate my heart from the love of God, which is in our Lord Jesus Christ.” The judge said: Make hot a ball of lead and of brass, and place it under his armpits. And they did so, until his ribs began to be seen. Sharbil said: The tortures thou dost inflict upon me are too little for thy rage against me—unless thy rage were little and thy tortures were great. The judge said: Thou wilt not hurry me on by these things which thou sayest; for I have room in my mind to bear long with thee, and to behold every evil and shocking and bitter thing which I shall exhibit in the torment of thy body, because thou wilt not consent to sacrifice to the gods whom thou didst formerly worship.

28 Sharbil said: Those things which I have said and repeated before thee, thou in thine unbelief knowest not how to hear: now, supposest thou that thou knowest those things which are in my mind? The judge said: The answers which thou givest will not help thee, but will multiply upon thee inflictions manifold. Sharbil said: If the several stories of thy several gods are by thee accepted as true, yet is it matter of shame to us to tell of what sort they are. For one had intercourse with boys, which is not right; and another fell in love with a maiden, who fled for refuge into a tree, as your shameful stories tell. The judge said: This fellow, who was formerly a respecter of the gods, but has now turned to insult them and has not been afraid, and has also despised the command of the emperors and has not trembled—set him to stand upon a gridiron heated with fire.

29 And the executioners did so, until the under part of his feet was burnt off. Sharbil said: If thy rage is excited at my mention of the abominable and obscene tales of thy gods, how much more does it become thee to be

ashamed of their acts! For lo! if a person were to do what one of thy gods did, and they were to bring him before thee, thou wouldest pass sentence of death upon him. The judge said: This day will I bring thee to account for thy blasphemy against the gods, and thine audacity in insulting also the emperors; nor will I leave thee alone until thou offer incense to them, according to thy former custom. Sharbil said: Stand by thy threats, then, and speak not falsely; and show towards me in deeds the authority of the emperors which they have given thee; and do not thyself bring reproach on the emperors with thy falsehood, and be thyself also despised in the eyes of thine attendants!

³⁰ The judge said: Thy blasphemy against the gods and thine audacity towards the emperors have brought upon thee these tortures which thou art undergoing; and, if thou add further to thine audacity, there shall be further added to thee inflictions bitterer than these. Sharbil said: Thou hast authority, as judge: do whatsoever thou wilt, and show no pity. The judge said: How can he that hath had no pity on his own body, so as to avoid suffering in it these tortures, be afraid or ashamed of not obeying the command of the emperors? Sharbil said: Thou hast well said that I am not ashamed: because near at hand is He that justifieth me, and my soul is caught up in rapture towards him. For, whereas I once provoked Him to anger by the sacrifices of idols, I am this day pacifying Him by the inflictions I endure in my person: for my soul is a captive to God who became man.

³¹ The judge said: It is a captive, then, that I am questioning, and a madman without sense; and with a dead man who is burnt, lo! am I talking. Sharbil said: If thou art assured that I am mad, question me no further: for it is a madman that is being questioned; nay, rather, I am a dead man who is burnt, as thou hast said. The judge said: How shall I count thee a dead man, When lo! thou hast cried aloud, "I will not sacrifice?" Sharbil said: I myself, too, know not how to return thee an answer, since thou hast called me a dead man and yet turnest to question me again as if alive. The judge said: Well have I called thee a dead man, because thy feet are burnt and thou carest not, and thy face is scorched and thou holdest thy peace, and nails are driven in between thine eyes and thou takest no account of it, and thy ribs are seen between the furrows of the combs and thou insultest the emperors, and thy whole body is mangled and maimed with stripes and thou blasphemest against the gods; and, because thou hatest thy body, lo! thou sayest whatsoever pleaseth thee.

³² Sharbil said: If thou callest me audacious because I have endured these things, it is fit that thou, who hast inflicted them upon me, shouldest be called a murderer in thy acts and a blasphemer in thy words. The judge said: Lo! thou hast insulted the emperors, and likewise the gods; and lo! thou insultest me also, in order that I may pronounce sentence of death upon thee quickly. But instead of this, which thou lookest for, I am prepared yet further to inflict upon thee bitter and severe tortures. Sharbil said: Thou knowest what I have said to thee many times: instead of denunciations of threatening, proceed to show upon me the performance of the threat, that thou mayest be known to do the will of the emperors. The judge said: Let him be torn with combs upon his legs and upon the sides of his thighs. And the executioners did so, until his blood flowed and ran down upon the ground.

³³ Sharbil said: Thou hast well done in treating me thus: because I have heard that one of the teachers of the Church hath said, "Scars are on my body, that I may come to the resurrection from the place of the dead." Me too, who was a dead man out of sight, lo! thine inflictions bring to life again. The judge said: Let him be torn with combs on his face, since he is not ashamed of the nails which are driven in between his eyes. And they tore him with combs upon his cheeks, and between the nails which were driven into them. Sharbil said: I will not obey the emperors, who command that to be worshipped and honoured which is not of the nature of God, and is not God in its nature, but is the work of him that made it. The judge said: Like as the emperors worship, so also worship thou; and that honour which the judges render, do thou render also.

³⁴ Sharbil said: Even though I insult that which is the work of men and has no perception and no feeling of anything, yet do not thou insult God, the Maker of all, nor worship along with Him that which is not of Him, and is foreign to His nature. The judge said: Does this your doctrine so teach you, that you should insult the very luminaries which give light to all the regions of the earth? Sharbil said: Although it is not enjoined upon us to insult them, yet it is enjoined upon us not to worship them nor honour them, seeing that they are things made: for this were an insufferable wrong, that a thing made should be worshipped along with its Maker; and it is an insult to the Maker that His creatures should be honoured along with Himself. The judge said: Christ whom thou confessest was hanged on a tree; and on a tree will I hang thee, like thy Master.

³⁵ And they hanged him on a tree a long while. Sharbil said: As for Christ, whom lo! thou mockest—see how thy many gods were unable to stand before Him: for lo! they are despised and rejected, and are made a laughing-stock and a jest by those who used formerly to worship them. The judge said: How is it that thou renouncest the gods, and confessest Christ, who was hanged on a tree? Sharbil said: This cross of Christ is the great boast of the Christians, since it is by this that the deliverance of salvation has come to all His worshippers, and by this that they have had their eyes enlightened, so as not to worship creatures along with the Creator. The governor said: Let thy boasting of the cross be kept within thy own mind, and let incense be offered by thy hands to the gods. Sharbil said: Those who have been delivered by the cross cannot any longer worship and serve the idols of error made with hands: for creature cannot worship creature, because it is itself also designed to be a worshipper of Him who made it; and that it should be worshipped along with its Maker is an insult to its Maker, as I have said before.

³⁶ The governor said: Leave alone thy books which have taught thee to speak thus, and perform the command of the emperors, that thou idle not by the emperors' law. But Sharbil said: Is this, then, the justice of the emperors, in whom thou takest such pride, that we should leave alone the law of God and keep their laws? The governor said: The citation of the books in which thou believest, and from which thou hast quoted—it is this which has brought upon thee these afflictions: for, if thou hadst offered incense to the gods, great would have been thine honour, like as it was formerly, as priest of the gods. Sharbil said: To thine unbelieving heart these things seem as if they were afflictions; but to the true heart "affliction imparts patience, and from it comes also experience, and from experience likewise the hope" of the confessor. The governor said: Hang him up and tear him with combs upon his former wounds.

³⁷ And, from the fury with which the judge urged on the executioners, his very bowels were almost seen. And, lest he should die under the combs and escape from still further tortures, he gave orders and they took him down. And, when the judge saw that he was become silent and was not able to return him any further answer, he refrained from him a little while, until he began to revive. Sharbil said: Why hast thou had pity upon me for even this little time, and kept me back from the gain of a confessor's death? The governor said: I have not had pity on thee at all in refraining for a little

while: thy silence it was that made me pause a little; and, if I had power beyond the law of the emperors, I should like to lay other tortures upon thee, so as to be more fully avenged on thee for thine insult toward the gods: for in despising me thou hast despised the gods; and I, on my part, have borne with thee and tortured thee thus, as a man who so deserves.

³⁸ And the judge gave orders, and suddenly the curtain fell before him for a short time; and he settled and drew up the sentence which he should pronounce against him publicly. And suddenly the curtain was drawn back again; and the judge cried aloud and said: As regards this Sharbil, who was formerly priest of the gods, but has turned this day and renounced the gods, and has cried aloud “I am a Christian,” and has not trembled at the gods, but has insulted them; and, further, has not been afraid of the emperors and their command; and, though I have bidden him sacrifice to the gods according to his former custom, has not sacrificed, but has treated them with the greatest insult: I have looked into the matter, and decided, that towards a man who doeth these things, even though he were now to sacrifice, it is not fit that any mercy should be shown; and that it is not fit that he should any longer behold the sun of his lords, because he has scorned their laws. I give sentence that, according to the law of the emperors, a strap be thrust into the mouth of the insulter, as into the mouth of a murderer, and that he depart outside of the city of the emperors with haste, as one who has insulted the lords of the city and the gods who hold authority over it. I give sentence that he be sawn with a saw of wood, and that, when he is near to die, then his head be taken off with the sword of the headsmen.

³⁹ And forthwith a strap was thrust into his mouth with all speed, and the executioners hurried him off, and made him run quickly upon his burnt feet, and took him away outside of the city, a crowd of people running after him. For they had been standing looking on at his trial all day, and wondering that he did not suffer under his afflictions: for his countenance, which was cheerful, testified to the joy of his heart. And, when the executioners arrived at the place where he was to receive the punishment of death, the people of the city were with them, that they might see whether they did according as the judge had commanded, and hear what Sharbil might say at that season, so that they might inform the judge of the country. ⁴⁰ And they offered him some wine to drink, according to the custom of murderers to drink. But he said to them: I will not drink, because I wish to feel the saw with which ye

saw me, and the sword which ye pass over my neck; but instead of this wine, which will not be of any use to me, give me a little time to pray, while ye stand. And he stood up, and looked toward the east, and lifted up his voice and said: Forgive me, Christ, all the sins I have committed against Thee, and all the times in which I have provoked Thee to anger by the polluted sacrifices of dead idols; and have pity on me and save me, and deliver me from the judgment to come; and be merciful to me, as Thou wast merciful to the robber; and receive me like the penitents who have been converted and have turned to Thee, as Thou also hast turned to them; and, whereas I have entered into Thy vineyard, at the eleventh hour, instead of judgment, deliver me from justice: let Thy death, which was for the sake of sinners, restore to life again my slain body in the day of Thy coming.

⁴¹ And, when the Sharirs of the city heard these things, they were very angry with the executioners for having given him leave to pray. And, while the nails were remaining which had been driven in between his eyes, and his ribs were seen between the wounds of the combs, and while from the burning on his sides and the soles of his feet, which were scorched and burnt, and from the gashes of the combs on his face, and on his sides, and on his thighs, and on his legs, the blood was flowing and running down, they brought carpenters' instruments, and thrust him into a wooden vice, and tightened it upon him until the bones of his joints creaked with the pressure; then they put upon him a saw of iron, and began sawing him asunder; and, when he was just about to die, because the saw had reached to his mouth, they smote him with the sword and took off his head, while he was still squeezed down in the vice.

⁴² And Babai his sister drew near and spread out her skirt and caught his blood; and she said to him: May my spirit be united with thy spirit in the presence of Christ, whom thou hast known and believed. And the Sharirs of the city ran and came and informed the judge of the things which Sharbil had uttered in his prayer, and how his sister had caught his blood. And the judge commanded them to return and give orders to the executioners that, on the spot where she had caught the blood of her brother, she also should receive the punishment of death. And the executioners laid hold on her, and each one of them severally put her to torture; and, with her brother's blood upon her, her soul took its flight from her, and they mingled her blood with his. And, when the executioners were entered into the city, the brethren and

young men ran and stole away their two corpses; and they laid them in the burial-place of the father of Abshelama the bishop, on the fifth of Ilul, the eve of the Sabbath.

⁴³ I wrote these Acts on paper—I, Marinus, and Anatolus, the notaries; and we placed them in the archives of the city, where the papers of the kings are placed. ⁴⁴ This Barsamya, the bishop, made a disciple of Sharbil the priest. And he lived in the days of Binus, bishop of Rome; in whose days the whole population of Rome assembled together, and cried out to the prætor of their city, and said to him: There are too many strangers in this our city, and these cause famine and dearness of everything; but we beseech thee to command them to depart out of the city. And, when he had commanded them to depart out of the city, these strangers assembled themselves together, and said to the prætor: We beseech thee, my lord, command also that the bones of our dead may depart with us. And he commanded them to take the bones of their dead, and to depart. And all the strangers assembled themselves together to take the bones of Simon Cephas and of Paul, the apostles; but the people of Rome said to them: We will not give you the bones of the apostles. And the strangers said to them: Learn ye and understand that Simon, who is called Cephas, is of Bethsaida of Galilee, and Paul the apostle is of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia. And, when the people of Rome knew that this matter was so, then they let them alone. And, when they had taken them up and were removing them from their places, immediately there was a great earthquake; and the buildings of the city were on the point of falling down, and the city was near being overthrown.

⁴⁵ And, when the people of Rome saw it, they turned and besought the strangers to remain in their city, and that the bones might be laid in their places again. And, when the bones of the apostles were returned to their places, there was quietness, and the earthquakes ceased, and the winds became still, and the air became bright, and the whole city became cheerful. And when the Jews and pagans saw it, they also ran and fell at the feet of Fabianus, the bishop of their city, the Jews crying out: We confess Christ, whom we crucified: He is the Son of the living-God, of whom the prophets spoke in their mysteries. And the pagans also cried out and said to him: We renounce idols and carved images, which are of no use, and we believe in Jesus the King, the Son of God, who has come and is to come again. And, what ever other doctrines there were in Rome and in all Italy, the followers of

these also renounced their doctrines, like as the pagans had renounced theirs, and confessed the Gospel of the apostles, which was preached in the church.

⁴⁶ Here end the Acts of Sharbil the confessor.

FURTHER, THE MARTYRDOM OF BARSAMYA

¹ Further, the Martyrdom of Barsamya, the Bishop of the Blessed City Edessa. In the year four hundred and sixteen of the kingdom of the Greeks, that is the fifteenth year of the reign of the sovereign ruler, our lord, Trajan Cæsar, in the consulship of Commodus and Cyrillus, in the month Ilul, on the fifth day of the month, the day after Lysinus, the judge of the country, had heard the case of Sharbil the priest; as the judge was sitting in his judgment-hall, the Sharirs of the city came before him and said to him: We give information before thine Excellency concerning Barsamya, the leader of the Christians, that he went up to Sharbil, the priest, as he was standing and ministering before the venerable gods, and sent and called him to him secretly, and spoke to him, quoting from the books in which he reads in the church where their congregation meets, and recited to him the belief of the Christians, and said to him, "It is not right for thee to worship many gods, but only one God, and His Son Jesus Christ"—until he made him a disciple, and induced him to renounce the gods whom he had formerly worshipped; and by means of Sharbil himself also many have become disciples, and are gone down to the church, and lo! this day they confess Christ; and even Avida, and Nebo, and Barcalba, and Hafsai, honourable and chief persons of the city, have yielded to Sharbil in this. We, accordingly, as Sharirs of the city, make this known before thine Excellency, in order that we may not receive punishment as offenders for not having declared before thine Excellency the things which were spoken in secret to Sharbil by Barsamya the guide of the church. Thine Excellency now knoweth what it is right to command in respect of this said matter.

² And, immediately that the judge heard these things, he sent the Sharirs of the city, and some of his attendants with them, to go down to the church and bring up Barsamya from the church. And they led him and brought him up to the judgment-hall of the judge; and there went up many Christians with him, saying: We also will die with Barsamya, because we too are of one mind with him in respect to the doctrine of which he made Sharbil a disciple, and in all that he spoke to him, and in all the instruction that Sharbil received from him, so that he was persuaded by him, and died for the sake of

that which he heard from him. And the Sharirs of the city came, and said to the judge: Barsamya, as thine Excellency commanded, lo! is standing at the door of the judgment-hall of thy Lordship; and honourable chief-persons of the city, who became disciples along with Sharbil, lo! are standing by Barsamya, and crying out, "We will all die with Barsamya, who is our teacher and guide."

³ And, when the judge heard those things which the Sharirs of the city had told him, he commanded them to go out and write down the names of the persons who were crying out, "We will die with Barsamya." And, when they went out to write down the names of these persons, those who so cried out were too many for them, and they were not able to write down their names, because they were so many: for the cry kept coming to them from all sides, that they "would die for Christ's sake along with Barsamya." And, when the tumult of the crowd became great, the Sharirs of the city turned back, and came in to the judge, and said to him: We are not able to write down the names of the persons who are crying aloud outside, because they are too many to be numbered. And the judge commanded that Barsamya should be taken up to the prison, so that the crowd might be dispersed which was collected together about him, lest through the tumult of the multitude there should be some mischief in the city. And, when he went up the gaol, those who had become disciples along with Sharbil continued with him.

⁴ And after many days were passed the judge rose up in the morning and went down to his judgment-hall, in order that he might hear the case of Barsamya. And the judge commanded, and they brought him from the prison; and he came in and stood before him. The officers said: Lo, he standeth before thine Excellency. The judge said: Art thou Barsamya, who hast been made ruler and guide of the people of the Christians, and didst make a disciple of Sharbil, who was chief-priest of the gods, and used to worship them? Barsamya said: It is I who have done this, and I do not deny it; and I am prepared to die for the truth of this. The judge said: How is it that thou wast not afraid of the command of the emperors, so that, when the emperors commanded that every one should sacrifice, thou didst induce Sharbil, when he was standing and sacrificing to the gods and offering incense to them, to deny that which he had confessed, and confess Christ whom he had denied?

⁵ Barsamya said: I was assuredly made a shepherd of men, not for the sake of those only who are found, but also for the sake of those who have strayed

from the fold of truth, and become food for the wolves of paganism; and, had I not sought to make Sharbil a disciple, at my hands would his blood have been required; and, if he had not listened to me, I should have been innocent of his blood. The judge said: Now, therefore, since thou hast confessed that it was thou that madest Sharbil a disciple, at thy hands will I require his death; and on this account it is right that thou rather than he shouldst be condemned before me, because by thy hands he has died the horrible deaths of grievous tortures for having abandoned the command of the emperors and obeyed thy words. Barsamya said: Not to my words did Sharbil become a disciple, but to the word of God which He spoke: "Thou shalt not worship images and the likenesses of men." And it is not I alone that am content to die the death of Sharbil for his confession of Christ, but also all the Christians, members of the Church, are likewise eager for this, because they know that they will secure their salvation before God thereby.

6 The judge said: Answer me not in this manner, like Sharbil thy disciple, lest thine own torments be worse than his; but promise that thou wilt sacrifice before the gods on his behalf. Barsamya said: Sharbil, who knew not God, I taught to know Him: and dost thou bid me, who have known God from my youth, to renounce God? God forbid that I should do this thing! The judge said: Ye have made the whole creation disciples of the teaching of Christ; and lo! they renounce the many gods whom the many worshipped. Give up this way of thinking, lest I make those who are near tremble at thee as they behold thee to-day, and those also that are afar off as they hear of the torments to which thou art condemned. Barsamya said: If God is the help of those who pray to Him, who is he that can resist them? Or what is the power that can prevail against them? Or thine own threats—what can they do to them: to men who, before thou give commandment concerning them that they shall die, have their death already set before their eyes, and are expecting it every day?

7 The judge said: Bring not the subject of Christ before my judgment-seat; but, instead of this, obey the command of the emperors, who command to sacrifice to the gods. Barsamya said: Even though we should not lay the subject of Christ before thee, yet the sufferings of Christ are portrayed indelibly in the worshippers of Christ; and, even more than thou hearkenest to the commands of the emperors, do we Christians hearken to the commands of Christ the King of kings. The judge said: Lo! thou hast obeyed Christ and

worshipped him up to his day: henceforth obey the emperors, and worship the gods whom the emperors worship. Barsamya said: How canst thou bid me renounce that in which I was born? when lo! thou didst exact punishment for this at the hand of Sharbil, and saidst to him: Why hast thou renounced the paganism in which thou wast born, and confessed Christianity to which thou wast a stranger? Lo! even before I came into thy presence thou didst thyself give testimony on the matter beforehand, and saidst to Sharbil: The Christians, to whom thou art gone over, do not renounce that in which they were born, but continue in it. Abide, therefore, by the word, which thou hast spoken.

8 The judge said: Let Barsamya be scourged, because he has rebelled against the command of the emperors, and has caused those also who were obedient to the emperors to rebel with him. And, when he had been scourged by five men, he said to him: Reject not the command of the emperors, nor insult the emperors' gods. Barsamya said: Thy mind is greatly blinded, O judge, and so also is that of the emperors who gave thee authority; nor are the things that are manifest seen by you; nor do ye perceive that lo! the whole creation worships Christ; and thou sayest to me, Do not worship Him, as if I alone worshipped Him—Him whom the watchers above worship on high. The judge said: But if ye have taught men to worship Christ, who is it that has persuaded those above to worship Christ? Barsamya said: Those above have themselves preached, and have taught those below concerning the living worship of the King Christ, seeing that they worship Him, and His Father, together with His divine Spirit.

9 The judge said: Give up these things which your writings teach you, and which ye teach also to others, and obey those things which the emperors have commanded, and spurn not their laws—lest ye be spurned by means of the sword from the light of this venerable sun. Barsamya said: The light which passeth away and abideth not is not the true light, but is only the similitude of that true light, to whose beams darkness cometh not near, which is reserved and standeth fast for the true worshippers of Christ. The judge said: Speak not before me of anything else instead of that about which I have asked thee, lest I dismiss thee from life to death, for denying this light which is seen and confessing that which is not seen. Barsamya said: I cannot leave alone that about which thou askest me, and speak of that about which thou dost not ask me. It was thou that spakest to me about the light of the

sun, and I said before thee that there is a light on high which surpasses in its brightness that of the sun which thou dost worship and honour. For an account will be required of thee for worshipping thy fellow-creature instead of God thy Creator.

¹⁰ The judge said: Do not insult the very sun, the light of creatures, nor set thou at nought the command of the emperors, nor contentiously resist the lords of the country, who have authority in it. Barsamya said: Of what avail is the light of the sun to a blind man that cannot see it? For without the eyes of the body, it is not possible for its beams to be seen. So that by this thou mayest know that it is the work of God, forasmuch as it has no power of its own to show its light to the sightless. The judge said: When I have tortured thee as thou deservest, then will I write word about thee to the Imperial government, reporting what insult thou hast offered to the gods, in that thou madest a disciple of Sharbil the priest, one who honoured the gods, and that ye despise the laws of the emperors, and that ye make no account of the judges of the countries, and live like barbarians, though under the authority of the Romans.

¹¹ Barsamya said: Thou dost not terrify me by these things which thou sayest. It is true, I am not in the presence of the emperors to-day; yet lo! before the authority which the emperors have given thee I am now standing, and I am brought to trial, because I said, I will not renounce God, to whom the heavens and the earth belong, nor His Son Jesus Christ, the King of all the earth. The judge said: If thou art indeed assured of this, that thou art standing and being tried before the authority of the emperors, obey their commands, and rebel not against their laws, lest like a rebel thou receive the punishment of death. Barsamya said: But if those who rebel against the emperors, even when they justly rebel, are deserving of death, as thou sayest; for those who rebel against God, the King of kings, even the punishment of death by the sword is too little.

¹² The judge said: It was not that thou shouldest expound in my judgment-hall that thou wast brought in before me, because the trial on which thou standest has but little concern with expounding, but much concern with the punishment of death, for those who insult the emperors and comply not with their laws. Barsamya said: Because God is not before your eyes, and ye refuse to hear the word of God; and graven images that are of no use, "which have a mouth and speak not," are accounted by you as though they

spake, because your understanding is blinded by the darkness of paganism in which ye stand— The judge interrupting said: Leave off those things thou art saying, for they will not help thee at all, and worship the gods, before the bitter tearings of combs and harsh tortures come upon thee. Barsamya said: Do thou too leave off the many questions which lo! thou askest me, and give command for the stripes and the combs with which thou dost menace me: for thy words will not help thee so much as thy inflictions will help me.

¹³ The judge said: Let Barsamya be hanged up and torn with combs. And at that very moment there came to him letters from Alusis the chief proconsul, father of emperors. And he commanded, and they took down Barsamya, and he was not torn with combs; and they took him outside of the hall of judgment. And the judge commanded that the nobles, and the chief persons, and the princes, and the honourable persons of the city, should come before him, that they might hear what was the order that was issued by the emperors, by the hand of the proconsuls, the rulers of the countries under the authority of the Romans. And it was found that the emperors had written by the hand of the proconsuls to the judges of the countries: “Since our Majesty commanded that there should be a persecution against the people of the Christians, we have heard and learned, from the Sharirs whom we have in the countries under the dominion of our Majesty, that the people of the Christians are persons who eschew murder, and sorcery, and adultery, and theft, and bribery and fraud, and those things for which the laws of our Majesty also exact punishment from those who commit them. We, therefore, in our impartial justice, have commanded that on account of these things the persecution of the sword shall cease from them, and that there shall be rest and quietness in all our dominions, they continuing to minister according to their custom and no man hindering them. It is not, however, towards them that we show clemency, but towards their laws, agreeing as they do with the laws of our Majesty. And, if any man hinder them after this our command, that sword which is ordered by us to descend upon those who despise our command, the same do we command to descend upon those who despise this decree of our clemency.”

¹⁴ And, when this command of the emperor’s clemency was read, the whole city rejoiced that there was quietness and rest for every man. And the judge commanded, and they released Barsamya, that he might go down to his church. And the Christians went up in great numbers to the judgment-

hall, together with a great multitude of the population of the city, and they received Barsamya with great and exceeding honour, repeating psalms before him, according to their custom; there went also the wives of the chief of the wise men. And they thronged about him, and saluted him, and called him “the persecuted confessor,” “the companion of Sharbil the martyr.” And he said to them: Persecuted I am, like yourselves; but from the tortures and combs of Sharbil and his companions I am clean escaped. And they said to him: We have heard from thee that a teacher of the Church has said, “The will, according to what it is, so is it accepted.” And, when he was entered into the church, he and all the people that were with him, he stood up and prayed, and blessed them and sent them away to their homes rejoicing and praising God for the deliverance which He had wrought for them and for the Church.

¹⁵ And the day after Lysinas the judge of the country had set his hand to these Acts, he was dismissed from his authority. I Zenophilus and Patrophilus are the notaries who wrote these Acts, Diodorus and Euterpes, Sharirs of the city, bearing witness with us by setting-to their hand, as the ancient laws of the ancient kings command. This Barsamya, bishop of Edessa, who made a disciple of Sharbil, the priest of the same city, lived in the days of Fabianus, bishop of the city of Rome. And ordination to the priesthood was received by Barsamya from Abshelama, who was bishop in Edessa; and by Abshelama ordination was received from Palut the First; and by Palut ordination was received from Serapion, bishop of Antioch; and by Serapion ordination was received from Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome; and Zephyrinus of Rome received ordination from Victor of the same place, viz., Rome; and Victor received ordination from Eleutherius; and Eleutherius received it from Soter; and Soter received it from Anicetus; and Anicetus received it from Dapius; and Dapius received it from Telesphorus; and Telesphorus received it from Xystus; and Xystus received it from Alexander; and Alexander received it from Evartis; and Evartis received it from Cletus; and Cletus received it from Anus; and Anus received it from Simon Cephas; and Simon Cephas received it from our Lord, together with his fellow-apostles, on the first day of the week, the day of the ascension of our Lord to His glorious Father, which was the fourth day of Heziran, which was is the nineteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, in the consulship of Rufus and Rubelinus, which year was the year 341; for in the year 309 occurred the advent

of our Saviour in the world, according to the testimony which we ourselves have found in a correct register among the archives, which errs not at all in whatever it sets forth.

¹⁶ Here endeth the martyrdom of Barsamya, bishop of Edessa.

Extracts Concerning Abgar and Addaeus

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

CHAPTER 1

Ancient Syriac Documents. Extracts from Various Books Concerning Abgar the King and Addæus the Apostle. I. Of the blessed Addæus the apostle. From his teaching which he gave in Edessa before Abgar the King and the assembly of the city. And, when he had entered the sepulchre, he was raised to life again, and came forth from the sepulchre with many. And those who were guarding the sepulchre saw not how He came forth from the sepulchre; but the watchers from on high—they were the proclaimers and announcers of His resurrection. For, had He not willed, He had not died, because He is Lord of death, the exit from this life; nor, had it not pleased Him, would He have put on a body, inasmuch as He is Himself the framer of the body. For that will which led Him to stoop to be born of the Virgin, likewise caused Him further to descend to the suffering of death.—And a little after (we read): For, although His appearance was that of men, yet His power, and His knowledge, and his authority, were those of God.

CHAPTER 2

II. From the teaching of Addæus the apostle, which was spoken in the city of Edessa. Ye know that I said unto you, that none of the souls which go forth out of the bodies of men are under the power of death, but that they all live and continue to exist, and that there are for them mansions and an abode of rest. For the reasoning power of the soul does not cease, nor the knowledge, because it is the image of the immortal God. For it is not without perceptions, after the manner of the bodily frame, which has no perception of that corruption which has acquired dominion over it. Recompense, however, and reward it will not receive apart from its bodily form, because what it experi-

ences belongs not to itself alone, but to the bodily form also in which it dwelt for a time. But the disobedient, who have not known God, will then repent without avail.

CHAPTER 3

III. From the epistle of Addæus the apostle, which he spake in the city of Edessa. Give heed to this ministry which ye hold, and with fear and trembling continue ye in it, and minister every day. Minister ye not in it with neglectful habits, but with the discreetness of faith. And let not the praises of Christ cease out of your mouth, and let not any sense of weariness come over you at the season of prayers. Give heed to the verity which ye hold, and to the teaching of the truth which ye have received, and to the teaching of salvation which I commit to you. Because before the tribunal of Christ will it be required of you, when He maketh reckoning with the pastors and overseers, and when He shall take His money from the traders with the usury of what they have taught. For He is the Son of a King, and goeth to receive a kingdom, and He will return and come and make a resuscitation to life of all men.

CHAPTER 4

IV. Addæus preached at Edessa and in Mesopotamia (he was from Paneus) in the days of Abgar the king. And, when he was among the Zophenians, Severus the son of Abgar sent and slew him at Agel Hasna, as also a young man his disciple.

CHAPTER 5

V. 71. and Narcissus. For they did not suffer that selection of the Seventy-two to be wanting, as likewise neither that of the Twelve. This man was of the Seventy-two: perhaps he was a disciple of Addæus the apostle.

CHAPTER 6

1 VI. From the departure of Marath Mary from the world, and the birth and childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Book the Second. In the year three hundred and forty-five, in the month of the latter Tishrin, Marath Mary went out from her house, and went to the sepulchre of Christ: because every day she used to go and weep there. But the Jews immediately after the death of Christ seized the sepulchre, and heaped great stones at the door of it. And over the sepulchre and Golgotha they set guards, and commanded them that, if any one should go and pray at the sepulchre or at Golgotha, he

should immediately be put to death. And the Jews took away the cross of our Lord, and those two other crosses, and that spear with which our Saviour was struck, and those nails which they drove into His hands and into His feet, and those robes of mockery in which He had been clad; and they hid them: lest, as they said, any one of the kings or of the chief persons should come and inquire concerning the putting to death of Christ.

² And the guards went in and said to the priests: Mary cometh in the evening and in the morning, and prayeth there. And there was a commotion in Jerusalem on account of Marath Mary. And the priests went to the judge, and said to him: My lord, send and command Mary that she go not to pray at the sepulchre and at Golgotha. And while they were deliberating, lo! letters came from Abgar, the king of the city of Edessa, to Sabina the procurator who had been appointed by Tiberius the emperor, and as far as the river Euphrates the procurator Sabina had authority. And, because Addæus the apostle, one of the seventy-two apostles, had gone down and built a church at Edessa, and had cured the disease with which Abgar the king was afflicted—for Abgar the king loved Jesus Christ, and was constantly inquiring about Him; and, when Christ was put to death and Abgar the king heard that the Jews had slain Him on the cross, he was much displeased; and Abgar arose and rode and came as far as the river Euphrates, because he wished to go up against Jerusalem and lay it waste; and, when Abgar came and was arrived at the river Euphrates, he deliberated in his mind: If I pass over, there will be enmity between me and Tiberius the emperor. And Abgar wrote letters and sent them to Sabina the procurator, and Sabina sent them to Tiberius the emperor. In this manner did Abgar write to Tiberius the emperor:—

³ “From Abgar, the king of the city of Edessa. Much peace to thy Majesty, our lord Tiberius! In order that thy Majesty may not be offended with me, I have not passed over the river Euphrates: for I have been wishing to go up against Jerusalem and lay her waste, forasmuch as she has slain Christ, a skillful healer. But do thou, as a great sovereign who hast authority over all the earth and over us, send and do me judgment on the people of Jerusalem. For be it known to thy Majesty that I desire that thou wilt do me judgment on the crucifiers.” And Sabina received the letters, and sent them to Tiberius the emperor. And, when he had read them, Tiberius the emperor was greatly incensed, and he desired to destroy and slay all the Jews. And the people of Jerusalem heard it and were alarmed. And the priests went to the governor, and

said to him: My lord, send and command Mary that she go not to pray at the sepulchre and Golgotha. The judge said to the priests: Go ye yourselves, and give her what command and what caution ye please.

CHAPTER 7

VII. From the homily composed by the holy Mar Jacob, the teacher, on the fall of idols. To Edessa he made his journey, and found in it a great work: For the king was become a labourer for the church, and was building it. The apostle Addæus stood in it like a builder, And King Abgar laid aside his diadem and builded with him. When apostle and king concurred the one with the other, What idol must not fall before them? Satan fled to the land of Babylon from the disciples, And the tale of the crucifixion had got before him to the country of the Chaldeans. He said, when they were making sport of the signs of the Zodiac, that he was nothing.

CHAPTER 8

VIII. From the homily about the town of Antioch. To Simon was allotted Rome, and to John Ephesus; to Thomas India, and to Addæus the country of the Assyrians. And, when they were sent each one of them to the district which had been allotted to him, they devoted themselves to bring the several countries to discipleship.

Homilies, Composed by Mar Jacob

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

HOMILY ON HABIB THE MARTYR

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. Homily on Habib the Martyr, Composed by Mar Jacob. Habib the martyr, clad in flame, hath called to me out of the fire, That for him likewise I should fashion an image of beauty among the glorious. Comrade of conquerors, lo! he beckoneth to me out of the burning, That, as for the glory of his Lord, I should sing concerning him. In the midst of live coals stands the heroic man, and lo! he calleth to me, That I should fashion his image: but the blazing fire permits me not. His love is fervid, glowing is his faith; His fire also burneth, and who is adequate to recount his love? Nay, by reason of that love which led the martyr into the fire, No man is able to recount his beauties divine. For who shall dare enter and see in the blazing fire To whom he is like, and after what pattern he is to be fashioned among the glorious?

² Shall I fashion his image by the side of the youths, the children of the furnace? With Hananiah shall I reckon Habib? I know not. Lo! these were not burned there: how, then, is he like? He, I say, like them, when he was burned and the youths not? Which, I ask, the more beautiful—Habib the martyr, or Azariah? Difficult for me is the image: how I am to look upon it, I know not. Lo! Michael was not burned by the flame; But Habib was burned: which, then, the more beautiful to him that looketh upon him? Who shall dare say that this is repulsive, or that; Or not so comely this as that, to him that beholdeth him? Three there are in the fire, and the flame cometh not near them; But one was burned: and how shall I suffice to tell That the Fourth form is that of Him who went down into the midst of the furnace,

3 That He might fashion an image for Habib there along with those of the three? He giveth a place in the fire to him who was burned, That he may be, instead of Him the Fourth, by the side of the conquerors. And, if of the three the beauties be glorious, though they were not burned, How shall not this one, who was burned, be mingled with the glorious? If a man have the power either to be burned or not to be burned, Of this man, who was burned, more exalted was the beauty than that of the three. But, inasmuch as the Lord is the control of all things, He is to be praised, both where He rescues and where He delivers up. Moreover, too, the will of the three who were not burned, And of him who was burned, is one and the same, in this case and in that;

4 And, had its Lord commanded the fire to burn them, Even those three on their part, burned they would have been; And, if He had signified to it that it should not burn that one man also, He would not have been burned; nor had it been of himself that he was rescued. To go into the fire was of their own will, when they went in; But that they were not burned—because the Lord of the fire willed and commanded it. Therefore one equal beauty is that of him who was burned, And that of him who was not burned, because the will also was equal. Beloved martyr! exalted is thy beauty; exalted is thy rank: Graceful too thy crown, and mingled thy story with that of the glorious. Choice gold art thou, and the fire hath tried thee, and resplendent is thy beauty. And lo! into the King's crown art thou wrought, along with the victorious.

5 Good workman! who, in the doctrine of the Son of God, Pursueth his course like a valiant man, because of the beauty of his faith. Habib the martyr was a teacher of that which is true; A preacher also, whose mouth was full of faith. Watchful was he, and prompt for service; and he encouraged with his teaching The household of the house of God, through his faith. Of light was he full, and he wrestled with the darkness Which overspread the country from the paganism which had darkened it. With the Gospel of the Son was his mouth filled in the congregations; And as it were a leader of the way did he become to the villages when he arrived in them. Zealous he was, because he was concerned for the doctrine Divine, that he might establish the adherents of the faith. At the time when the winds of the pagans blew, a lamp was he,

6 And flamed forth whilst they blew upon him, and went not out. All on fire was he, and filled with the love of his Lord, and was concerned For this—that he might speak of Him without hindrance. The thorns of error sprang up in the land from paganism; And, as much as in him lay, he rooted them out by his diligence. He taught, admonished, and confirmed in the faith, The friends of Christ, who were harassed by persecutors. Against sword and against fire did he wrestle, With love hot as the flame, and was not afraid. Like a two-edged brand, keen was His faith, and against error did he contend. Leaven did he prove to be in this land which had become exhausted Through fondness for the idols of vanity which error had brought in. He was like salt by reason of his savoury doctrine To this region, which had become insipid through unbelief.

7 A deacon was he, and filled the place of a high-priest By the preaching and teaching of that which is true. He was to the flock a good shepherd whilst he was its overseer; And his life laid he down for the flock while he tended it. He chased away the wolf, and drove off from it the beast of prey. And he repaired the breaches, and gathered the lambs into their folds. He went out secretly and encouraged the congregations: He strengthened them, and exhorted them, and held them up. And he forged armour of faith, and put it on them, That they might not be ignominiously overthrown by the paganism which abounded. The flocks of the fold of the Son of God were being laid waste By persecutors: and he encouraged the lambs and the ewes. And he was an advocate to the household of faith; And he taught them not to be daunted by persecutors.

8 He taught them to run to meet death, Without being afraid either of sword or of fire. In the teaching of the Son of God he prospered, So that his faith pursued its course without dread. Then error grew envious, became furious, and was maddened, because of him; And she pursued after him, that she might shed upon the earth innocent blood. The Defamer, who hates the race of men, Laid snares for him, that he might rid the place of his presence. He who hateth the truth pursued after him to put him to death, That he might make his voice to cease from the teaching of the house of God. And error raised an outcry demanding that Habib should die, because she hated him; Vexation goaded her on, and she sought to take away his life. His story was talked about before the pagan judge of the country,

9 And the dear fame of him reached the king: who in great rage, And because the diadem was interwoven with paganism, decreed death Against Habib, because he was full of faith. And, when the command reached the judge, he armed himself With rage and fury; and, with a mind thirsting for blood, And like hunters who lay nets for the young stag, After Habib did they go out to catch him. But this man was a preacher of the faith, Who in the highway of the crucifixion was prospering; And, that he might benefit by his teaching the children of his people, His work embraced the countries round about him. So, when error went out after him, she found him not: Not that he was fled, but that he had gone out to preach the Gospel. Then, because of the fury of the pagans, which was great beyond all that was meet,

10 His kindred and his mother did they seize for his sake. Blessed art thou, O woman! mother since thou art of the martyr. For wherefore was it that they seized thee and bound thee, iniquitously? What do they require of thee, O thou full of beauty? What, I ask, have they required of thee? Lo! they require of thee that thou bring the martyr, that he may be a sacrifice. Bring, oh bring thy sweet fruit to the place of the oblation— The fruit whose smell is fragrant, that it may be incense to the Godhead. Fair shoot, thy cluster bring from where it is, That its wine may be for a libation whose taste is sweet. The lamb heard that they were seeking him, that he might be a sacrifice; And he set out and came to the sacrificers rejoicing. He heard that others also were being afflicted for his sake,

11 And he came that he might bear the suffering which was his, in the stead of many. The lot fell on him, to be himself alone a sacrifice; And the fire that was to offer him up was looking out for him until he came. Of the many who were bound for his sake Not one single person was seized to die, but only he. He it was that was worthy, and for him was martyrdom reserved; And to snatch the martyr's place no man was able. And therefore of his own will did he present himself To the judge, that he might be seized, and die for Jesus' sake. He heard that they sought him, and he came that he might be seized, even as they sought him: And he went in of himself before the judge, and dauntless was his look. He hid not himself, nor did he wish to flee from the judge:

12 For with light was he imbued, and from the darkness he would not flee. No robber was he, no murderer, no thief, No child of night: but all his course was run in open day. Wherefore from his flock should the good shep-

herd flee, And leave his fold to be devoured by robbers? Wherefore should the physician flee, who goeth forth to heal diseases, And to cure souls by the blood of the Son of God? A fearless countenance did the brave man carry with him, and a great heart; And to meet death he ran, rejoicing, for Jesus' sake. He went in, he stood before the judge, saying to him: I am Habib, whom ye sought: lo! here I stand. And the pagan trembled, and amazement seized him, and he marvelled at him— At the man who was not afraid, either of sword or of fire. While he thought that he was fleeing apace, he entered in and mocked him;

13 And the judge shook, for he saw him courageous in the very face of death. A disciple he of that Son of God who said: "Rise, come, let us go: for he that betrayeth me lo! is here." And to the crucifiers, again, He said: "Whom seek ye?" They say: "Jesus." And He said to them: "I am He." The Son of God of His own will came to the cross; And on Him the martyr looked, and presented himself uncompelled before the judge. And the pagan beheld him, and was smitten with fear, and was exasperated against him. His rage was excited, and he began in his fury to put to him questions. And, as if he had been one who had shed on the ground the blood of the slain, He proceeded to question the saintly man, but he was not ashamed: Menacing him, and trying to terrify him, and to frighten him,

14 And recounting the sufferings which were being prepared by him on his account. But Habib, when questioned, was not afraid, Was not ashamed, and was not frightened by the menaces he heard. Lifting up his voice, he confessed Jesus, the Son of God— That he was His servant, and was His priest, and His minister. At the fury of the pagans, roaring at him like lions, He trembled not, nor ceased from the confession of the Son of God. He was scourged, and the scourgings were very dear to him, Seeing that he bore a little of the stripes of the Son of God. He was put into bonds, and he looked on his Lord, whom also they had bound; And his heart rejoiced that in the path of His sufferings he had begun to walk. He ascended the block, and they tore him with combs, but his soul was radiant with light,

15 Because he was deemed worthy that on him should come the agony of the sufferings of crucifixion. In the pathway of death had he set his face to walk, And what could he desire to find in it but sufferings? The fire of sacrifice was betrothed to him, and for her did he look; And she on her part sent him combs, and stripes, and pains, to taste. All the while that she was com-

ing, she sent him sufferings, that by means of them He might be prepared, so that when she met him she might not dismay him. Sufferings purged him, so that, when the blazing fire should put him to the proof, There might not be any dross found in his choice gold. And he endured the whole of the pains that came upon him, That he might have experience of suffering, and in the burning stand like a brave man.

16 And he accepted rejoicing the sufferings which he had to bear: For he knew that at their termination he should find death. And he was not afraid, either of death or of sufferings: For with that wine of the crucifixion his heart was drunk. He despised his body, while it was being dragged along by the persecutors; And his limbs, while they were being torn asunder in bitter agony. Scourges on his back, combs on his sides, stocks on his feet, And fire in front of him: still was he brave and full of faith. They taunted him: Lo! thou worshippest a man; But he said: A man I worship not, But God, who took a body and became man: Him do I worship, because He is God with Him that begat Him. The faith of Habib, the martyr, was full of light And by it was enlightened Edessa, the faithful city.

17 The daughter of Abgar, whom Addæus betrothed to the crucifixion—Through it is her light, through it her truth and her faith. Her king is from it, her martyrs from it, her truth from it; The teachers also of her faith are from it. Abgar believed that Thou art God, the Son of God; And he received a blessing because of the beauty of his faith. Sharbil the martyr, son of the Edessæans, more-ever said: My heart is led captive by God, who became man. And Habib the martyr, who also was crowned at Edessa, Confessed these things: that He took a body and became man; That He is the Son of God, and also is God, and became man. Edessa learned from teachers the things that are true: Her king taught her, her martyrs taught her, the faith; But to others, who were fraudulent teachers, she would not hearken.

18 Habib the martyr, in the ear of Edessa, thus cried aloud Out of the midst of the fire: A man I worship not, But God, who took a body and became man Him do I worship. Thus confessed the martyr with uplifted voice. From confessors torn with combs, burnt, raised up on the block, slain And from a righteous king, did Edessa learn the faith, And she knows our Lord—that He is even God, the Son of God; She also learned and firmly believed that He took a body and became man. Not from common scribes did she learn the faith: Her king taught her, her martyrs taught her; and she firmly

believed them: And, if she be calumniated as having ever worshipped a man, She points to her martyrs, who died for Him as being God. A man I worship not, said Habib, Because it is written: “Cursed is he that putteth his trust in a man.”

19 Forasmuch as He is God, I worship Him, yea submit to be burned For His sake, nor will I renounce His faith. This truth has Edessa held fast from her youth, And in her old age she will not barter it away as a daughter of the poor. Her righteous king became to her a scribe, and from him she learned Concerning our Lord—that He is the Son of God, yea God. Addæus, who brought the bridegroom’s ring and put it on her hand, Betrothed her thus to the Son of God, who is the Only-begotten. Sharbil the priest, who made trial and proof of all gods, Died, even as he said, “for God who became man.” Shamuna and Guria, for the sake of the Only-begotten, Stretched out their necks to receive the stroke, and for Him died, forasmuch as He is God. And Habib the martyr, who was teacher of congregations,

20 Preached of Him, that He took a body and became man. For a man the martyr would not have submitted to be burned in the fire; But he was burned “for the sake of God who became man.” And Edessa is witness that thus he confessed while he was being burned: And from the confession of a martyr that has been burned who is he that can escape? All minds does faith reduce to silence and despise— She that is full of light and stoopeth not to shadows. She despiseth him that maligns the Son by denying that He is God; Him too that saith “He took not a body and became man.” In faith which was full of truth he stood upon the fire; And he became incense, and propitiated with his fragrance the Son of God. In all his afflictions, and in all his tortures, and in all his sufferings,

21 Thus did he confess, and thus did he teach the blessed city. And this truth did Edessa hold fast touching our Lord— Even that He is God, and of Mary became a man. And the bride hates him that denies His God-head, And despises and contemns him that maligns His corporeal nature. And she recognises Him as One in Godhead and in manhood— The Only-begotten, whose body is inseparable from Him. And thus did the daughter of the Parthians learn to believe, And thus did she firmly hold, and thus does she teach him that listens to her. The judge, therefore, full of zeal for paganism, commanded That the martyr should be led forth and burned in the fire which was reserved for him. And forthwith a strap was thrust into his

mouth, as though he had been a murderer, His confession being kept within his heart towards God. And they hurried him away, and he went out from the judgment-hall, rejoicing

22 That the hour was come when the crown should be given to his faith. And there went out with him crowds of people, that they might bear him company, Looking upon him, not as a dead man accompanied to his burial, But as a man who was going away that by means of fire he might become a bridegroom, And that there might be bestowed the crown which was by righteousness reserved for him. They looked upon him as upon a man entering into battle, And around him were spears, and lances, and swords, but he vanquished them. They beheld him going up like a champion from the contest, And in his triumph chaplets were brought to him by those who beheld. They looked upon him as he vanquished principalities and powers, Which all made war with him, and he put them to shame. The whole congregation of the followers of Christ exulted over him,

23 Because he raised up the friends of the faith by the sufferings which he bore. There went forth with him the Church, a bride full of light; And her face was beaming on the beloved martyr who was united to her. Then did his mother, because it was the marriage-feast for her son, Deck herself in garments nobler than her wont. Since sordid raiment suited not the banquet-hall, In magnificent attire all white she clad herself right tastefully. Hither to the battle came down love to fight In the mother's soul—the love of nature, and the love of God. She looked upon her son as he went forth to be put into the flame; And, forasmuch as there was in her the love of the Lord, she suffered not. The yearnings of her mother's womb cried out on behalf of its fruit; But faith silenced them, so that their tumult ceased.

24 Nature shrieked over the limb which was severed from her; But the love of the Lord intoxicated the soul, that she should not perceive it. Nature loved, but the love of the Lord did conquer in the strife Within the soul of the mother, that she should not grieve for her beloved. And instead of suffering, her heart was filled with all emotions of joy; And, instead of mourning, she went forth in splendid apparel. And she accompanied him as he went out to be burned, and was elate, Because the love of the Lord vanquished that of nature. And clad in white, as for a bridegroom, she made a marriage-feast— She the mother of the martyr, and was blithe because of him. “Shamuna the Second” may we call this blessed one: Since, had seven

been burned instead of one, she had been well content. One she had, and she gave him to be food for the fire;

25 And, even as that one, if she had had seven, she had given them all. He was cast into the fire, and the blaze kindled around him; And his mother looked on, and grieved not at his burning. Another eye, which gazeth upon the things unseen, Was in her soul, and by reason of this she exulted when he was being burned. On the gems of light which are in martyrs' crowns she looked, And on the glory which is laid up for them after their sufferings; And on the promised blessings which they inherit yonder through their afflictions, And on the Son of God who clothes their limbs with light; And on the manifold beauties of that kingdom which shall not be dissolved, And on the ample door which is opened for them to enter in to God. On these did the martyr's mother look when he was being burned,

26 And she rejoiced, she exalted, and in white did she go forth with him. She looked upon him while the fire consumed his frame, And, forasmuch as his crown was very noble, she grieved not. The sweet root was thrown into the fire, upon the coals; And it turned to incense, and cleansed the air from pollution. With the fumes of sacrifice had the air been polluted, And by the burning of this martyr was it cleansed. The firmament was fetid with the exhalations from the altars; And there rose up the sweet perfume of the martyr, and it grew sweet thereby. And the sacrifices ceased, and there was peace in the assemblies; And the sword was blunted, that it should no more lay waste the friends of Christ. With Sharbil it began, with Habib it ended, in our land; And from that time even until now not one has it slain, since he was burned.

27 Constantine, chief of conquerors, took the empire, And the cross has trampled on the diadem of the emperor, and is set upon his head. Broken is the lofty horn of idolatry, And from the burning of the martyr even until now not one has it pierced. His smoke arose, and it became incense to the Godhead; And by it was the air purged which was tainted by paganism, And by his burning was the whole land cleansed: Blessed be he that gave him a crown, and glory, and a good name! Here endeth the Homily on Habib the martyr, composed by Mar Jacob.

HOMILY ON GURIA AND SHAMUNA

1 A Homily on Guria and Shamuna, Composed by Mar Jacob. Shamuna and Guria, martyrs who made themselves illustrious in their afflictions, Have in

love required of me to tell of their illustrious deeds. To champions of the faith the doctrine calleth me, That I should go and behold their contests and their crowns. Children of the right hand, who have done battle against the left, Have called me this day to recite the marvellous tale of their conflicts:— Simple old men, who entered into the fight like heroes, And nobly distinguished themselves in the strife of blood: Those who were the salt of our land, and it was sweetened thereby, And its savour was restored, which had become insipid through unbelief: Candlesticks of gold, which were full of the oil of the crucifixion, By which was lighted up all our region, which had turned to darkness: Two lamps, of which, when all the winds were blowing

² Of every kind of error, the lights were not put out; Good labourers, who from the spring of day laboured In the blessed vineyard of the house of God right duteously: Bulwarks of our land, who became to us as it were a defence Against all spoilers in all the wars that surrounded us: Havens of peace, a place also of retreat for all that were distressed, And a resting-place for the head of every one that was in need of succour: Two precious pearls, which were An ornament for the bride of my lord Abgar, the Aramæan's son. Teachers they were who practised their teaching in blood, And whose faith was known by their sufferings. On their bodies they wrote the story of the Son of God With the marks of combs and scourges which thickly covered them. They showed their love, not by words of the mouth alone,

³ But by tortures and by the rending of their limbs asunder. For the love of the Son of God they gave up their bodies: Since it beseemeth the lover that for his love he should give up himself. Fire and sword proved their love, how true it was; And more beautiful than silver tried in a furnace of earth were their necks. They looked on God, and, because they saw His exalted beauties, Therefore did they look with contempt upon their sufferings for His sake. The Sun of righteousness had arisen in their hearts; And they were enlightened by it, and with His light chased they away the darkness. At the idols of vanity, which error had brought in, they laughed, Instinct with the faith of the Son of God which is full of light. The love of the Lord was as a fire in their hearts; Nor could all the brambles of idolatry stand before it.

⁴ Fixed was their love on God unchangeably: And therefore did they look with scorn upon the sword, all athirst as it was for blood. With guilelessness and yet with wisdom stood they in the judgment-hall, As they had been commanded by the Teacher of that which is true. Despising as they did

kindred and family, guileless were they; Forasmuch, also, as possessions and wealth were held in no account by them. Nor guileless only: for in the judgment-hall with the wisdom of serpents too They were heedful of the faith of the house of God. When a serpent is seized and struck, he guards his head, But gives up and leaves exposed all his body to his captors: And, so long as his head is kept from harm, his life abideth in him; But, if the head be struck, his life is left a prey to destruction. The head of the soul is men's faith;

5 And, if this be preserved unharmed, by it is also preserved their life: Even though the whole body be lacerated with blows, Yet, so long as faith is preserved, the soul is alive; But, if faith is struck down by unbelief, Lost is the soul, and life has perished from the man. Shamuna and Guria of the faith as men Were heedful, that it should not be struck down by persecutors: For they knew that, if faith is preserved, Both soul and body are preserved from destruction. And, because of this, touching their faith were they solicitous, That that should not be struck down in which their very life was hidden. They gave up their bodies both to blows and to dislocation, Yea to every kind of torture, that their faith should not be stricken down; And, even as the serpent also hides his head from blows, So hid they their faith within their hearts;

6 And the body was smitten, and endured stripes, and bore sufferings: But overthrown was not their faith which was within their hearts. The mouth betrayeth the soul to death when it speaks, And with the tongue, as with a sword, worketh slaughter. And from it spring up both life and death to men: Denying a man dies, confessing he lives, and the mouth hath power over it. Denial is death, and in confession is the soul's life; And power hath the mouth over them both, like a judge. The word of the mouth openeth the door for death to enter in; This, too, calleth for life, and it beameth forth upon the man. Even the robber by one word of faith Won him the kingdom, and became heir of paradise, all fraught with blessings. The wicked judges too, from the martyrs, the sons of the right hand, Demanded that by word of mouth only they should blaspheme;

7 But, like true men holding fast the faith, They uttered not a word by which unbelief might be served. Shamuna, beauty of our faith, who is adequate to tell of thee? All too narrow is my mouth for thy praise, too mean for thee to be spoken of by it. Thy truth is thy beauty, thy crown thy suffering, thy wealth thy stripes, And by reason of thy blows magnificent is the

beauty of thy championship. Proud of thee is our country, as of a treasury which is full of gold: Since wealth art thou to us, and a coveted store which cannot be stolen from us. Guria, martyr, staunch hero of our faith, Who shall suffice thee, to recount thy beauties divine? Lo! tortures on thy body are set like gems of beryl, And the sword on thy neck like a chain of choice gold. Thy blood upon thy form is a robe of glory full of beauty,

⁸ And the scourging of thy back a vesture with which the sun may not compare. Radiant thou art and comely by virtue of these thy sufferings, so abounding; And resplendent are thy beauties, because of the pains which are so severe upon thee. Shamuna, our riches, richer art thou than the rich: For lo! the rich stand at thy door, that thou mayest relieve them. Small thy village, poor thy country: who, then, gave thee That lords of villages and cities should court thy favour? Lo! judges in their robes and vestments Take dust from thy threshold, as though it were the medicine of life. The cross is rich, and to its worshippers increaseth riches; And its poverty despiseth all the riches of the world. Shamuna and Guria, sons of the poor, lo! at your doors Bow down the rich, that they may receive from you supplies for their wants.

⁹ The Son of God in poverty and want Showed to the world that all its riches are as nothing, His disciples, all fishermen, all poor, all weak, All men of little note, became illustrious through His faith. One fisherman, whose “village” too was a home of fishermen, He made chief over the twelve, yea head of the house. One a tentmaker, who aforetime was a persecutor, He seized upon, and made him a chosen vessel for the faith. Shamuna and Guria came from villages that were not wealthy, And lo! in a great city became they lords; And its chief men, its judges also, stand before their doors, And they solicit their charity to satisfy their wants. From their confession of the faith of the Son of God These blessed men acquired riches beyond compute. Poor did He Himself become, and the poor made He rich; And lo! enriched is the whole creation through His poverty.

¹⁰ The chosen martyrs did battle against error, And in the confession of the Son of God stood they firm like valiant men. They went in and confessed Him before the judge with look undaunted, That He too might confess them, even as they confessed Him, before His Father. There arose against them the war of pagans like a tempest; But the cross was their helmsman, and steered them on. They were required to sacrifice to lifeless images, But they departed not from their confession of the Son of God. The wind of id-

olatri blew in their faces, But they themselves were as rocks piled up against the hurricane. Like a swift whirlwind, error snatched at them; But, forasmuch as they were sheltered by the crucifixion, it hurt them not. The Evil One set on all his dogs to bark, that they might bite them; But, forasmuch as they had the cross for a staff, they put them all to flight.

11 But who is sufficient to tell of their contests, Or their sufferings, or the rending asunder of their limbs? Or who can paint the picture of their coronation, How they went up from the contest covered with glory? To judgment they went in, but of the judge they took no account; Nor were they anxious what they should say when questioned. The judge menaced them, and multiplied his words of threatening; And recounted tortures and all kinds of inflictions, that he might terrify them. He spake great words, that by fright and intimidation, By menaces too, he might incline them to sacrifice. Yet the combatants despised the menaces, and the intimidations, And the sentence of judgment, and all bodily deaths; And they prepared themselves for insult and stripes, and for blows, And for provocation, and to be dragged along, and to be burnt; For imprisonment also, and for bonds, and for all evil things,

12 And for all tortures, and for all sufferings, rejoicing all the while. They were not alarmed nor affrighted, nor dismayed, Nor did the sharpness of the tortures bend them to sacrifice. Their body they despised, and as dung upon the ground accounted they it: For they knew that, the more it was beaten, the more would its beauty increase; And, the more the judge increased his menaces to alarm them, The more did they show their contempt of him, having no fear of his threats. He kept telling them what tortures he had prepared for them; And they continued telling him about Gehenna which was reserved for him. By those things which he told them he tried to frighten them to sacrifice; And they spoke to him about the fearful judgment yonder. Truth is wiser than wise words, And very hateful, however much it may be adorned, is falsehood. Shamuna and Guria went on speaking truth,

13 While the judge continued to utter falsehood. And therefore were they not afraid of his threatening, Because all his menaces against the truth were accounted by them as empty sound. The intercourse of the world they despised, they contemned and scorned, yea they abandoned; And to return to it they had no wish, or to enter it again. From the place of judgment they set their faces to depart To that meeting-place for them all, the life of the new

world. They cared neither for possessions nor for houses, Nor for the advantages of this world, so full of evil. In the world of light was their heart bound captive with God, And to “that” country did they set their face to depart; And they looked to the sword, to come and be a bridge To let them pass over to God, for whom they were longing. This world they accounted as a little tent,

14 But that yonder as a city full of beauties; And they were in haste by the sword to depart hence To the land of light, which is full of blessing for those who are worthy of it. The judge commanded to hang them up by their arms, And without mercy did they stretch them out in bitter agony. A demon’s fury breathed rage into the heart of the judge, And embittered him against the steadfast ones, inciting him to crush them; And between the height and the depth he stretched them out to afflict them: And they were a marvel to both sides, when they saw how much they endured. At the old men’s frame heaven and earth marvelled, To see how much suffering it bore nor cried out for help under their affliction. Hung up and dragged along are their feeble bodies by their arms, Yet is there deep silence, nor is there one that cries out for help or that murmurs.

15 Amazed were all who beheld their contests, To see how calmly the out-stretched forms bore the inflictions laid upon them. Amazed too was Satan at their spotless frames, To see what weight of affliction they sustained without a groan. Yea, and gladdened too were the angels by that fortitude of theirs, To see how patiently it bore that contest so terrible that was. But, as combatants who were awaiting their crowns, There entered no sense of weariness into their minds. Nay, it was the judge that grew weary; yea, he was astonished: But the noble men before him felt no weariness in their afflictions. He asked them whether they would consent to sacrifice; But the mouth was unable to speak from pain. Thus did the persecutors increase their inflictions, Until they gave no place for the word to be spoken. Silent was the mouth from the inflictions laid on their limbs;

16 But the will, like that of a hero, was nerved with fortitude from itself. Alas for the persecutors! how destitute were they of righteousness! But the children of light—how were they clad in faith! They demand speech, when there is no place for speaking, Since the word of the mouth was forbidden them by pain. Fast bound was the body, and silent the mouth, and it was unable To utter the word when unrighteously questioned. And what should the

martyr do, who had no power to say, When he was questioned, that he would not sacrifice? All silent were the old men full of faith, And from pain they were incapable of speaking. Yet questioned they were: and in what way, if a man is silent When he is questioned, shall he assent to that which is said? But the old men, that they might not be thought to assent,

17 Expressed clearly by signs the word which it behoved them to speak. Their heads they shook, and, instead of speech, by a dumb sign they showed The resolve of the new man that was within. Their heads hung down, signifying amidst their pains That they were not going to sacrifice, and every one understood their meaning. As long as there was in them place for speech, with speech did they confess; But, when it was forbidden them by pain, they spake with a dumb sign. Of faith they spoke both with the voice and without the voice: So that, when speaking and also when silent, they were alike stedfast. Who but must be amazed at the path of life, how narrow it is, And how straight to him that desires to walk in it? Who but must marvel to see that, when the will is watchful and ready, It is very broad and full of light to him that goeth therein?

18 About the path are ditches; full also is it of pitfalls; And, if one turn but a little aside from it, a ditch receives him. That dumb sign only is there between the right and the left, And on "Yea" and "Nay" stand sin and righteousness. By a dumb sign only did the blessed men plainly signify that they would not sacrifice, And in virtue of a single dumb sign did the path lead them to Eden; And, if this same dumb sign had inclined and turned down but a little Toward the depth, the path of the old men would have been to Gehenna. Upwards they made a sign, to signify that upwards were they prepared to ascend; And in consequence of that sign they ascended and mingled with the heavenly ones. Between sign and sign were Paradise and Gehenna: They made a sign that they would not sacrifice, and they inherited the place of the kingdom.

19 Even while they were silent they were advocates for the Son of God: For not in multitude of words doth faith consist. That fortitude of theirs was a full-voiced confession, And as though with open mouth declared they their faith by signs; And every one knew what they were saying, though silent, And enriched and increased was the faith of the house of God; And error was put to shame by reason of two old men, who, though they spake not, Vanquished it; and they kept silence, and their faith stood fast. And, though

tempestuous accents were heard from the judge, And the commands of the emperor were dreadful, yea violent, And paganism had a bold face and an open mouth, And its voice was raised, and silent were the old men with pain, Yet null and void became the command and drowned was the voice of the judge, And without speech the mute sign of the martyrs bore off the palm.

20 Talking and clamour, and the sound of stripes, on the left; And deep silence and suffering standing on the right; And, by one mute sign with which the old men pointed above their heads, The head of faith was lifted up, and error was put to shame. Worst of in the encounter were they who spoke, and the victory was to the silent: For, voiceless they uttered by signs the discourse of faith. They took them down, because they had vanquished while silent; And they put them in bonds, threatening yet to vanquish them. Bonds and a dungeon void of light were by the martyrs Held of no account—yea rather as the light which has no end. To be without bread, and without water, and without light, Pleased them well, because of the love of the Son of God. The judge commanded by their feet to hang them up With their heads downwards, by a sentence all unrighteous:

21 Hanged up was Shamuna with his head downwards; and he prayed In prayer pure and strained clear by pain. Sweet fruit was hanging on the tree in that judgment-hall, And its taste and smell made the very denizens of heaven to marvel. Afflicted was his body, but sound was his faith; Bound fast was his person, but unfettered was his prayer over his deed. For, prayer nothing whatsoever turneth aside, And nothing hindereth it—not even sword, not even fire. His form was turned upside down, but his prayer was unrestrained, And straight was its path on high to the abode of the angels. The more the affliction of the chosen martyr was increased, The more from his lips was all confession heard. The martyrs longed for the whetted sword affectionately, And sought it as a treasure full of riches. A new work has the Son of God wrought in the world—

22 That dreadful death should be yearned for by many. That men should run to meet the sword is a thing unheard of, Except they were those whom Jesus has enlisted in His service by His crucifixion. That death is bitter, every one knoweth lo! from earliest time: To martyrs alone is it not bitter to be slain. They laughed at the whetted sword when they saw it, And greeted it with smiles: for it was that which was the occasion of their crowns. As though it had been something hated, they left the body to be beaten: Even

though loving it, they held it not back from pains. For the sword they waited, and the sword went forth and crowned them: Because for it they looked; and it came to meet them, even as they desired. The Son of God slew death by His crucifixion; And, inasmuch as death is slain, it caused no suffering to the martyrs.

23 With a wounded serpent one playeth without fear; A slain lion even a coward will drag along: The great serpent our Lord crushed by His crucifixion; The dread lion did the Son of God slay by His sufferings. Death bound He fast, and laid him prostrate and trampled on him at the gate of Hades; And now whosoever will draweth near and mocketh at him, because he is slain. These old men, Shamuna and Guria, mocked at death, As at that lion which by the Son of God was slain. The great serpent, which slew Adam among the trees, Who could seize, so long as he drank not of the blood of the cross? The Son of God crushed the dragon by His crucifixion, And lo! boys and old men mock at the wounded serpent. Pierced is the lion with the spear which pierced the side of the Son of God;

24 And whosoever will trampleth on him, yea mocketh at him. The Son of God—He is the cause of all good things, And Him doth it behove every mouth to celebrate. He did Himself espouse the bride with the blood which flowed from His wounds, And of His wedding-friends He demanded as a nuptial gift the blood of their necks. The Lord of the wedding-feast hung on the cross in nakedness, And whosoever came to be a guest, He let fall His blood upon him. Shamuna and Guria gave up their bodies for His sake To sufferings and tomes and to all the various forms of woe. At Him they looked as He was mocked by wicked men, And thus did they themselves endure mockery without a groan. Edessa was enriched by your slaughter, O blessed ones: For ye adorned her with your crowns and with your sufferings. Her beauty are ye, her bulwark ye, her salt ye,

25 Her riches and her store, yea her boast and all her treasure. Faithful stewards are ye: Since by your sufferings ye did array the bride in beauty. The daughter of the Parthians, who was espoused to the cross, Of you maketh her boast: since by your teaching lo! she was enlightened. Her advocates are ye; scribes who, though silent, vanquished All error, whilst its voice was uplifted high in unbelief. Those old men of the daughter of the Hebrews were sons of Belial, False witnesses, who killed Naboth, feigning themselves to be true. Her did Edessa outdo by her two old men full of beauty, Who were witnesses

to the Son of God, and died like Naboth. Two were there, and two here, old men; And these were called witnesses, and witnesses those. Let us now see which of them were witnesses chosen of God, And which city is beloved by reason of her old men and of her honourable ones.

26 Lo! the sons of Belial who slew Naboth are witnesses; And here Shamuna and Guria, again, are witnesses. Let us now see which witnesses, and which old men, And which city can stand with confidence before God. Sons of Belial were those witnesses of that adulterous woman, And lo! their shame is all portrayed in their names. Edessa's just and righteous old men, her witnesses, Were like Naboth, who himself also was slain for righteousness' sake. They were not like the two lying sons of Belial, Nor is Edessa like Zion, which also crucified the Lord. Like herself her old men were false, yea dared To shed on the ground innocent blood wickedly. But by these witnesses here lo! the truth is spoken.— Blessed be He who gave us the treasure-store of their crowns! Here endeth the Homily on Guria and Shamuna.

Martyrdom of Habib the Deacon

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

MARTYRDOM OF HABIB THE DEACON

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. Martyrdom of Habib the Deacon. In the month Ab, of the year six hundred and twenty of the kingdom of Alexander the Macedonian, in the consulate of Licinius and Constantine, which is the year in which he was born, in the magistracy of Julius and Barak, in the days of Cona, bishop of Edessa, Licinius made a persecution against the Church and all the people of the Christians, after that first persecution which Diocletian the emperor had made. And Licinius the emperor commanded that there should be sacrifices and libations, and that the altars in every place should be restored, that they might burn sweet spices and frankincense before Zeus. And, when many were persecuted, they cried out of their own accord: We are Christians; and they were not afraid of the persecution, because these who were persecuted were more numerous than those who persecuted them. Now Habib, who was of the village of Telzeha and had been made a deacon, went secretly into the churches which were in the villages, and ministered and read the Scriptures, and encouraged and strengthened many by his words, and admonished them to stand fast in the truth of their belief, and not to be afraid of the persecutors; and gave them directions.

² And, when many were strengthened by his words, and received his addresses affectionately, being careful not to renounce the covenant they had made, and when the Sharirs of the city, the men who had been appointed with reference to this particular matter, heard of it, they went in and informed Lysanias, the governor who was in the town of Edessa, and said to him: Habib, who is a deacon in the village of Telzeha, goes about and ministers secretly in every place, and resists the command of the emperors, and is

not afraid. And, when the governor heard these things, he was filled with rage against Habib; and he made a report, and sent and informed Licinius the emperor of all those things which Habib was doing; he wished also to ascertain what command would be issued respecting him and the rest of those who would not sacrifice. For although a command had been issued that every one should sacrifice, yet it had not been commanded what should be done to those who did not sacrifice: because they had heard that Constantine, the commander in Gaul and Spain, was become a Christian and did not sacrifice. And Licinius the emperor thus command Lysanias the governor: Whoever it is that has been so daring as to transgress our command, our Majesty has commanded that he shall be burned with fire; and that all others who do not consent to sacrifice shall be put to death by the sword.

³ Now, when this command came to the town of Edessa, Habib, in reference to whom the report had been made, was gone across the river to the country of the people of Zeugma, to minister there also secretly. And, when the governor sent and inquired for him in his village, and in all the country round about, and he was not to be found, he commanded that all his family should be arrested, and also the inhabitants of his village; and they arrested them and put them in irons, his mother and the rest of his family, and also some of the people of his village; and they brought them to the city, and shut them up in prison. And, when Habib heard what had taken place, he considered in his mind and pondered anxiously in his thoughts: It is expedient for me, said he, that I should go and appear before the judge of the country, rather than that I should remain in secret and others should be brought in to him and be crowned with martyrdom because of me, and that I should find myself in great shame. For in what respect will the name of Christianity help him who flees from the confession of Christianity? Lo! if he flee from this, the death of nature is before him whithersoever he goes, and escape from it he cannot, because this is decreed against all the children of Adam.

⁴ And Habib arose and went to Edessa secretly, having prepared his back for the stripes and his sides for the combs, and his person for the burning of fire. And he went immediately to Theotecna, a veteran who was chief of the band of attendants on the governor; and he said to him: I am Habib of Telzeha, whom ye are inquiring for. And Theotecna said to him: If so be that no one saw thee coming to me, hearken to me in what I say to thee, and depart and go away to the place where thou hast been, and remain there in

this time of persecution; and of this, that thou camest to me and spakest with me and that I advised thee thus, let no one know or be aware. And about thy family and the inhabitants of thy village, be not at all anxious: for no one will at all hurt them; but they will be in prison a few days only, and then the governor will let them go: because against them the emperors have not commanded anything serious or alarming. But, if on the contrary thou wilt not be persuaded by me in regard to these things which I have said to thee, I am clear of thy blood: because, if so be that thou appear before the judge of the country, thou wilt not escape from death by fire, according to the command of the emperors which they have issued concerning thee.

5 Habib said to Theotecna: It is not about my family and the inhabitants of my village that I am concerned, but for my own salvation, lest it should be forfeited. About this too I am much distressed, that I did not happen to be in my village on the day that the governor inquired for me, and that on my account lo! many are put in irons, and I have been looked upon by him as a fugitive. Therefore, if so be that thou wilt not consent to my request and take me in before the governor, I will go alone and appear before him. And, when Theotecna heard him speak thus to him, he laid hold of him firmly, and handed him over to his assistants, and they went together to conduct him to the judgment-hall of the governor. And Theotecna went in and informed the governor, and said to him: Habib of Telzeha, whom thine Excellency was inquiring for, is come. And the governor said: Who is it that has brought him? and where did they find him? and what did he do where he was? Theotecna said to him: He came hither himself, of his own accord, and without the compulsion of any one, since no one knew anything about him.

6 And when the governor heard this, he was greatly exasperated against him; and thus he spoke: This fellow, who has so acted, has shown great contempt towards me and has despised me, and has accounted me as no judge; and, because he has so acted, it is not meet that any mercy should be shown towards him; nor yet either that I should hasten to pass sentence of death against him, according to the command of the emperors concerning him; but it is meet for me to have patience with him, so that the bitter torments and punishments inflicted on him may be the more abundant, and that through him I may terrify many others from daring again to flee. And, many persons being collected together and standing by him at the door of the judgment-hall, some of whom were members of the body of attendants,

and some people of the city, there were some of them that said to him: Thou hast done badly in coming and showing thyself to those who were inquiring for thee, without the compulsion of the judge; and there were others, again, who said to him: Thou hast done well in coming and showing thyself of thine own accord, rather than that the compulsion of the judge should bring thee: for now is thy confession of Christ known to be of thine own will, and not from the compulsion of men.

7 And those things which the Sharirs of the city had heard from those who were speaking to him as they stood at the door of the judgment-hall—and this circumstance also in particular, that he had gone secretly to Theotecna and that he had not been willing to denounce him, had been heard by the Sharirs of the city—everything that they had heard they made known to the judge. And the judge was enraged against those who had been saying to Habib: Wherefore didst thou come and show thyself to the judge, without the compulsion of the judge himself? And to Theotecna he said: It is not seemly for a man who has been made chief over his fellows to act deceitfully in this manner towards his superior, and to set at nought the command of the emperors, which they issued against Habib the rebel, that he should be burned with fire.

8 Theotecna said: I have not acted deceitfully against my fellows, neither was it my purpose to set at naught the command which the emperors have issued: for what am I before thine Excellency, that I should have dared to do this? But I strictly questioned him as to that for which thine Excellency also has demanded an account at my hands, that I might know and see whether it was of his own free will that he came hither or whether the compulsion of thine Excellency brought him by the hand of others; and, when I heard from him that he came of his own accord, I carefully brought him to the honourable door of the judgment-hall of thy Worship. And the governor hastily commanded, and they brought in Habib before him. The officers said: Lo! he standeth before thine Excellency, And he began to question him thus, and said to him: What is thy name? And whence art thou? And what art thou?

9 He said to him: My name is Habib, and I am from the village of Telzeha, and I have been made a deacon. The governor said: Wherefore hast thou transgressed the command of the emperors, and dost minister in thine office of deacon, which thou art forbidden by the emperors to do, and re-

fusest to sacrifice to Zeus, whom the emperors worship? Habib said: We are Christians; we do not worship the works of men, who are nothing, whose works also are nothing; but we worship God, who made the men. The governor said: Persist not in that daring mind with which thou art come into my presence, and insult not Zeus, the great boast of the emperors. Habib said: But this Zeus is an idol, the work of men. It is very well for thee to say that I insult him. But, if the carving of him out of wood and the fixing of him with nails proclaim aloud concerning him that he is made, how sayest thou to me that I insult him? since lo! his insult is from himself, and against himself.

¹⁰ The governor said: By this very thing, that thou refusest to worship him, thou insultest him. Habib said: But, if because I do not worship him I insult him, how great an insult, then, did the carpenter inflict on him, who carved him with an axe of iron; and the smith, who smote him and fixed him with nails! And, when the governor heard him speak thus he commanded him to be scourged without pity. And, when he had been scourged by five men, he said to him: Wilt thou now obey the emperors? For, if thou wilt not obey them, I will tear thee severely with combs, and I will torture thee with all kinds of tortures, and then at last I will give command concerning thee that thou be burned with fire. Habib said: These threats with which lo! thou art seeking to terrify me, are much meaner and paltrier than those which I had already settled it in my mind to endure: therefore came I and made my appearance before thee.

¹¹ The governor said: Put him into the iron cask for murderers, and let him be scourged as he deserves. And, when he had been scourged, they said to him: Sacrifice to the gods. But he cried aloud, and said: Accursed are your idols, and so are they who join with you in worshipping them like you. And the governor commanded, and they took him up to the prison; but they refused him permission to speak with his family, or with the inhabitants of his village, according to the command of the judge. On that day was the festival of the emperors. And on the second of Ilul the governor commanded, and they brought him from the prison. And he said to him: Wilt thou renounce the profession thou hast made and obey the command which the emperors issue? For, if thou wilt not obey, with the bitter tearings of combs will I make thee obey them.

¹² Habib said: I have not obeyed them, and moreover it is settled in my mind that I will not obey them—no, not even if thou lay upon me punishments still worse than those which the emperors have commanded. The governor said: By the gods I swear, that, if thou do not sacrifice, I will leave no harsh and bitter sufferings untried with which I will not torture thee: and we shall see whether Christ, whom thou worshipping, will deliver thee. Habib said: All those who worship Christ are delivered through Christ, because they worship not creatures along with the Creator of creatures. The governor said: Let him be stretched out and be scourged with whips, until there remain not a place in his body on which he has not been scourged. Habib said: As for these inflictions, which thou supposest to be so bitter with their lacerations, out of them are plaited crowns of victory for those who endure them.

¹³ The governor said: How call ye afflictions ease, and account the torments of your bodies a crown of victory? Habib said: It is not for thee to ask me concerning these things, because thine unbelief is not worthy to hear the reasons of them. That I will not sacrifice I have said already, and I say so still. The governor said: Thou art subjected to these punishments because thou deservest them: I will put out thine eyes, which look upon this Zeus and are not afraid of him; and I will stop thine ears, which hear the laws of the emperors and tremble not. Habib said: To the God whom thou deniest here belongs that other world; and there wilt thou be made to confess Him with scourgings, though thou hast again denied Him. The governor said: Leave alone that world of which thou hast spoken, and consider anxiously now, that from this punishment to which lo! thou art being subjected there is no one that can deliver thee; unless indeed the gods deliver thee, on thy sacrificing to them.

¹⁴ Habib said: Those who die for the sake of the name of Christ, and worship not those objects that are made and created, will find their life in the presence of God; but those who love the life of time more than that—their torment will be for ever. And the governor commanded, and they hanged him up and tore him with combs; and, while they were tearing him with the combs, they knocked him about. And he was hanging a long while, until the shoulder blades of his arms creaked. The governor said to him: Wilt thou comply even now, and put on incense before Zeus there? Habib said: Previously to these sufferings I did not comply with thy demands: and now that lo! I have undergone them, how thinkest thou that I shall comply, and

thereby lose that which I have gained by them? The governor said: By punishments fiercer and bitterer than these I am prepared to make thee obey, according to the command of the emperors, until thou do their will.

¹⁵ Habib said: Thou art punishing me for not obeying the command of the emperors, when lo! thou thyself also, whom the emperors have raised to greatness and made a judge, hast transgressed their command, in that thou hast not done to me that which the emperors have commanded thee. The governor said: Because I have had patience with thee, therefore hast thou spoken thus, like a man that brings an accusation. Habib said: Hadst thou not scourged me, and bound me, and torn me with combs, and put my feet in fetters, there would have been room to think that thou hadst had patience with me. But, if these things take place in the meanwhile, where is the patience towards me of which thou hast spoken? The governor said: These things which thou hast said will not help thee, because they all go against thee, and they will bring upon thee inflictions bitterer even than those which the emperors have commanded.

¹⁶ Habib said: Had I not been sensible that they would help me, I should not have spoken a single word about them before thee. The governor said: I will silence thy speeches, and at the same time as regards thee pacify the gods, whom thou hast not worshipped; and I will satisfy the emperors in respect to thee, as regards thy rebellion against their commands. Habib said: I am not afraid of the death with which thou seekest to terrify me; for, had I been afraid of it, I should not have gone about from house to house and ministered: on which account I did so minister. The governor said: How is it that thou worshipping and honourest a man, but refusest to worship and honour Zeus there? Habib said: I worship not a man, because the Scripture teaches me, "Cursed is every one that putteth his trust in man;" but God, who took upon Him a body and became a man, Him do I worship, and glorify.

¹⁷ The governor said: Do thou that which the emperors have commanded; and, as for that which is in thy own mind, if thou art willing to give it up, well; but, if thou art not willing, then do not abandon it. Habib said: To do both these things is impossible: because falsehood is contrary to truth, and it is impossible that that should be banished from my thoughts which is firmly fixed in my mind. The governor said: By inflictions bitter and severe will I make thee dismiss from thy thoughts that of which thou hast said, It is firmly fixed in my mind. Habib said: As for these inflictions by

which thou thinkest that it will be rooted out of my thoughts, by means of these it is that it grows within my thoughts, like a tree which bears fruit. The governor said: What help will stripes and combs give to that tree of thine? and more especially at the time when I shall command fire against it, to burn it up without pity.

18 Habib said: It is not on those things at which thou lookest that I look, because I contemplate the things which are out of sight; and therefore I do the will of God, the Maker of all things, and not that of an idol made with hands, which is not sensible of anything whatever. The governor said: Because he thus denies the gods whom the emperors worship, let him be torn with combs in addition to his former tearings: for, amidst the many questions which I have had the patience to ask him, he has forgotten his former tearings. And, while they were tearing him, he cried aloud and said: "The sufferings of this time are not equal to that glory which shall be revealed in" those who love Christ. And, when the governor saw that even under these inflictions he refused to sacrifice, he said to him: Does your doctrine so teach you, that you should hate your own bodies?

19 Habib said: Nay, we do not hate our bodies: the Scripture distinctly teaches us, "Whosoever shall lose his life shall find it." But another thing too it teaches us: that we should "not cast that which is holy to dogs, nor cast pearls before swine." The governor said: I know that in speaking thus thy sole object is that my rage and the wrath of my mind may be excited, and that I may pronounce sentence of death against thee speedily. I am not going, then, to be hurried on to that which thou desirest; but I will have patience: not; indeed, for thy relief, but so that the tortures inflicted on thee may be increased, and that thou mayest see thy flesh falling off before thy face by means of the combs that are passing over thy sides. Habib said: I myself also am looking for this, that thou shouldst multiply thy tortures upon me, even as thou hast said.

20 The governor said: Submit to the emperors, who have power to do whatsoever they choose. Habib said: It is not of men to do whatsoever they choose, but of God, whose power is in the heavens, and over all the dwellers upon earth; "nor is there any that may rebuke His hands and say to Him, 'What doest Thou?'" The governor said: For this insolence of thine, death by the sword is too small. I, however, am prepared to command the infliction upon thee of a death more bitter than that of the sword. Habib said: And I,

too, am looking for a death which is more lingering than that of the sword, which thou mayest pronounce upon me at any time thou choosest. And thereupon the governor proceeded to pass sentence of death upon him. And he called out aloud before his attendants, and said, whilst they were listening to him, as were also the nobles of the city: This Habib, who has denied the gods, as ye have also heard from him, and furthermore has reviled the emperors, deserves that his life should be blotted out from beneath this glorious Sun, and that he should not any longer behold this luminary, associate of gods; and, had it not been commanded by former emperors that the corpses of murderers should be buried, it would not be right that the corpse of this fellow either should be buried, because he has been so insolent. I command, that a strap be put into his mouth, as into the mouth of a murderer, and that he be burned by a slow lingering fire, so that the torment of his death may be increased.

²¹ And he went out from the presence of the governor, with the strap thrust into his mouth; and a multitude of the people of the city ran after him. And the Christians were rejoicing, forasmuch as he had not turned aside nor quitted his post; but the pagans were threatening him, for refusing to sacrifice. And they led him forth by the western archway, over against the cemetery, which was built by Abshelama, the son of Abgar. And his mother was clad in white, and she went out with him. And, when he was arrived at the place where they were going to burn him, he stood up and prayed, as did all those who came out with him; and he said: "O King Christ, since Thine is this world, and Thine the world to come, behold and see, that, while I might have fled from these afflictions, I did not flee, in order that I might not fall into the hands of Thy justice: may this fire, in which I am to be burned, serve me for a recompense before Thee, so that I may be delivered from that fire which is not quenched; and receive Thou my spirit into Thy presence, through Thy Divine Spirit, O glorious Son of the adorable Father!" And, when he had prayed, he turned and blessed them; and they weeping gave him the salutation, both men and women; and they said to him: Pray for us in the presence of thy Lord, that He would cause peace among His people, and restoration to His churches which are overthrown.

²² And, while Habib was standing, they dug a place, and brought him and set him within it; and they fixed up by him a stake. And they came to bind him to the stake; but he said to them: I will not stir from this place in

which ye are going to burn me. And they brought fagots, and set them in order, and placed them on all sides of him. And, when the fire blazed up and the flame of it rose fiercely, they called out to him: Open thy mouth. And the moment he opened his mouth his soul mounted up. And they cried aloud, both men and women, with the voice of weeping. And they pulled and drew him out of the fire, throwing over him fine linen cloths and choice ointments and spices. And they snatched away some of the pieces of wood which had been put for his burning, and the brethren and some persons of the laity bore him away. And they prepared him for interment, and buried him by Guria and Shamuna the martyrs, in the same grave in which they were laid, on the hill which is called Baith Allah Cucla, repeating over him psalms and hymns, and conveying his burnt body affectionately and honourably to the grave. And even some of the Jews and pagans took part with the Christian brethren in winding up and burying his body. At the time, too, when he was burned, and also at the time when he was buried, there was one spectacle of grief over spreading those within and those without; tears, too, were running down from all eyes: while every one gave glory to God, because for His name's sake he had given his body to the burning of fire.

²³ The day on which he was burned was the eve of the Sabbath, the second of the month Ilul—the day on which the news came that Constantine the Great had set out from the interior of Spain, to proceed to Rome, the city of Italy, that he might carry on war with Licinius, that emperor who at this day rules over the eastern portion of the territories of the Romans; and lo! the countries on all sides are in commotion, because no man knows which of them will conquer and continue in his imperial power. And through this report the persecution slackened for a little while from the Church. And the notaries wrote down everything which they had heard from the judge; and the Sharirs of the city wrote down all the other things which were spoken outside the door of the judgment-hall, and, according to the custom that existed, they reported to the judge all that they had seen and all that they had heard, and the decisions of the judge were written down in their Acts.

²⁴ I, Theophilus, who have renounced the evil inheritance of my fathers, and confessed Christ, carefully wrote out a copy of these Acts of Habib, even as I had formerly written out those of Guria and Shamuna, his fellow-martyrs. And, whereas he had felicitated them upon their death by the sword, he himself also was made like them by the fire in which he was burnt, and re-

ceived his crown. And, whereas I have written down the year, and the month, and the day, of the coronation of these martyrs, it is not for the sake of those who, like me, were spectators of the deed, but with the view that those who come after us may learn at what time these martyrs suffered, and what manner of men they were; as they may learn also from the Acts of the former martyrs, who suffered in the days of Domitianus and of all the other emperors who likewise also raised a persecution against the Church, and put a great many to death, by stripes and by tearing with combs, and by bitter inflictions, and by sharp swords, and by burning fire, and by the terrible sea, and by the merciless mines. And all these things, and things like them, they suffered for the hope of the recompense to come.

²⁵ Moreover, the afflictions of these martyrs, and of those of whom I had heard, opened the eyes of me, Theophilus, and enlightened my mind, and I confessed Christ, that He is the Son of God, and is God. And may the dust of the feet of these martyrs, which I received as I was running after them at the time when they were departing to be crowned, procure me pardon for having denied Him, and may He confess me before His worshippers, seeing that I have confessed Him now! And at the twenty-seventh question which the judge put to Habib, he gave sentence against him of death by the burning of fire. Here endeth the martyrdom of Habib the deacon.

Martyrdom of the Holy Confessors Shamuna, Guria and Habib

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

MARTYRDOM OF THE HOLY CONFESSORS SHAMUNA, GURIA, AND
HABIB, FROM SIMEON METAPHRASTES

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. Martyrdom of the Holy Confessors Shamuna, Guria, and Habib, from Simeon Metaphrastes. In the six hundredth year from the empire of Alexander the Macedonian, when Diocletian had been nine years sovereign of the Romans, and Maximian was consul for the sixth time, and Augar son of Zoaras was prætor, and Cognatus was bishop of the Edessenes, a great persecution was raised against the churches in all the countries which were under the sway of the Romans. The name of Christian was looked upon as execrable, and was assailed and harassed with abuse; while the priests and the monks, on account of their staunch and unconquerable steadfastness, were subjected to shocking punishments, and the pious were at their wits' end with sadness and fear. For, desiring as they did to proclaim the truth because of their yearning affection for Christ, they yet shrunk back from doing so for fear of punishment. For those who took up arms against true religion were bent on making the Christians renounce Christianity and embrace the cause of Saturn and Rhea, whilst the faithful on their part laboured to prove that the objects of heathen worship had no real existence.

² At this period it was that an accusation was preferred before the judge against Guria and Shamuna. The former was a native of Sarcigitua, and the latter of the village of Ganas; they were, however, both brought up at Edessa—which they call Mesopotamia, because it is situated between the Euphrates and the Tigris: a city previously to this but little known to fame, but which after the struggles of its martyrs obtained universal notoriety. These holy

men would not by any means spend their lives in the city, but removing to a distance from it, as those who wished to be remote from its turmoils, they made it their aim to be manifest to God only. Guria's purity and lovingness were to him a precious and honourable possession, and from his cultivation of the former the surname of the pure was given him: so that from his name you would not have known who he was, but only when you called him by his surname. Shamuna devoted his body and his youthful and active mind to the service of God, and rivalled Guria in excellence of character. Against these men an indictment was laid before the judge, to the effect that they not only pervaded all the country round about Edessa with their teaching and encouraged the people to hold fast their faith, but also led them to look with contempt on their persecutors, and, in order to induce them to set wholly at nought their impiety, taught them agreeably to that which is written:

3 "Trust not in princes—in the sons of men, in whom is no safety. By these representations the judge was wrought up to a high pitch of madness, and gave orders that all those who held the Christian religion in honour and followed the teaching of Shamuna and Guria, together with those who persuaded them to this, should be apprehended, and shut up in safe keeping. The order was carried into effect; and, seizing the opportunity, he had some of them flogged, and others tortured in various ways, and induced them to obey the emperor's command, and then, as if he were behaving kindly and mercifully, he allowed others to go to their homes; but our two saints, as being the ringleaders and those who had communicated their piety to others, he ordered to be still further maltreated in prison. They, however, rejoiced in the fellowship of martyrdom. For they heard of many in other provinces who had to pass through the same conflict as themselves: among them Epiphanius and Petrus and the most holy Pamphilus, with many others, at Cæsarea in Palestine; Timotheus at Gaza; at Alexandria, Timotheus the Great; Agapetus at Thessalonica; Hesychius at Nicomedia; Philippus at Adrianopolis; at Melitina Petrus; Hermes and his companions in the confines of Martyropolis: all of whom were also encircled with the crown of martyrdom by Duke Heraclianus, along with other confessors too numerous for us to become acquainted with. But we must return to the matters of which we were before speaking.

4 Antonius, then, the governor of Edessa, having permitted others to return to their homes, had a lofty judgment-seat erected, and ordered the

martyrs to be brought before him. The attendants having done as they were bidden, the governor said to the saints: Our most divine emperor commands you to renounce Christianity, of which you are followers, and to pay divine honour to Jupiter by offering incense on the altar. To this Shamuna replied: Far be it from us to abandon the true faith, whereby we hope to obtain immortality, and worship the work of men's hands and an image! The governor said: The emperor's orders must by all means be obeyed. Guria answered: Our pure and divine faith will we never disown, by following the will of men, who are subject to dissolution. For we have a Father in heaven whose will we follow, and He says: "He that shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father who is in heaven; but he that shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father and His angels." The judge said: You refuse, then, to obey the will of the emperor? But can you for a moment think, that the purposes of ordinary men and such as have no more power than yourselves are to be really carried into execution, while the commands of those who possess supreme power fall to the ground? They, said the saints, who do the will of the King of kings spurn and reject the will of the flesh. Then, on the governor's threatening them with death unless they obeyed, Shamuna said: We shall not die, O tyrant, if we follow the will of the Creator: nay rather, on the contrary, we shall live; but, if we follow the commands of your emperor, know thou that, even though thou shouldst not put us to death, we shall perish miserably all the same.

5 On hearing this, the governor gave orders to Anovitus the jailor to put them in very safe keeping. For the mind which is naturally inclined to evil cannot bear the truth, any more than diseased eyes the bright beams of the sun. And, when he had done as he was commanded, and the martyrs were in prison, where many other saints also had been previously shut by the soldiers, the Emperor Diocletian sent for Musonius the governor of Antioch and ordered him to go to Edessa and see the Christians who were confined there, whether they were of the common or of the sacred class, and question them about their religion, and deal with them as he should see fit. So he came to Edessa; and he had Shamuna and Guria first of all placed before the tribunal of judgment, and said to them: This, and no less, is the command of the lord of the world, that you make a libation of wine and place incense on the altar of Jupiter. If you refuse to do so, I will destroy you with manifold punishments: for I will tear your bodies to pieces with whips, till I get to your very

entrails; and I will not cease pouring boiling lead into your armpits until it reaches even to your bowels; after that, I will hang you up, now by your hands, now by your feet, and I will loosen the fastenings of your joints; and I will invent new and unheard of punishments which you will be utterly unable to endure.

6 Shamuna answered: We dread “the worm,” the threat of which is denounced against those who deny the Lord, and “the fire which is not quenched,” more than those tortures which thou hast set before us. For God Himself, to whom we offer rational worship, will, first of all, strengthen us to bear these manifold tortures, and will deliver us out of thy hands; and, after that, will also give us to rest in a place of safety, where is the abode of all those who rejoice. Besides, it is against nothing whatever but the body that thou takest up arms: for what possible harm couldst thou do to the soul? since, as long as it resides in the body, it proves superior to torture; and, when it takes its departure, the body has no feeling whatever left. For, “the more our outward man is destroyed, the more is our inward man renewed day by day; for by means of patience we go through with this contest which is set before us. The governor, however, again, with a kind of protestation, in order that, in case they did not obey, he might with the more justice punish them, said: Give up your error, I beg you, and yield to the command of the emperor: ye will not be able to endure the tortures. The holy Guria answered: We are neither the slaves of error, as thou sayest, nor will we ever obey the command of the emperor: God forbid that we should be so weak-minded and so senseless!

7 For we are His disciples who laid down His life for us, so manifesting the riches of His goodness and His love towards us. We will, therefore, resist sin even to death, nor, come what may, will we be foiled by the stratagems of the adversary, by which the first man was ensnared and plucked death from the tree through his disobedience; and Cain was persuaded, and, after staining his hands with his brother’s blood, found the rewards of sin to be wailing and fear. But we, listening to the words of Christ, will “not be afraid of those that kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: Him rather will we fear “who is able to destroy our soul and body. The tyrant said: It is not to give you an opportunity of disproving my allegations by snatches of your own writings that I refrain from anger and show myself forbearing; but that

you may perform the command of the emperor and return in peace to your homes.

8 These words did not at all shake the resolution of the martyrs; but, approaching nearer: What, said they, does it matter to us, if thou art angry, and nursest thine anger, and rainest tortures upon us like snow-flakes? For then wouldst thou be favouring us all the more, by rendering the proof of our fortitude more conspicuous, and winning for us a greater recompense. For this is the crowning point of our hope, that we shall leave behind our present dwelling, which is but for a time, and depart to one that will last forever. For we have “a tabernacle not made with hands” in heaven, which the Scripture is accustomed also to call “Abraham’s bosom,” because of the familiar intercourse with God with which he was blessed. The governor, seeing that their firmness underwent no change, forthwith left off speaking and proceeded with the threatened punishments, giving orders to the jailor Anuinus that they should be severally hung up by one hand, and that, when their hands were dislocated by having to bear the entire weight of the body, he should further suspend a heavy stone to their feet, that the sense of pain might be the sharper. This was done, and from the third hour to the eighth they bore this severe torture with fortitude, uttering not a word, nor a groan, nor giving any other indication of a weak or abject mind. You would have said that they were suffering in a body which was not theirs, or that others were suffering and they themselves were nothing more than spectators of what was going on.

9 In the meantime, whilst they were hanging by their hands, the governor was engaged in trying other cases. Having done with these, he ordered the jailor to inquire of the saints whether or not they would obey the emperor and be released from their torture; and on his putting the question to them, when it was found that they either could not or would not return an answer, he ordered that they should be confined in the inner part of the prison, in a dark dungeon, dark both in name and in reality, and that their feet should be made fast in the stocks. At dawn of day, their feet were loosened from the confinement of the stocks; but their prison was close shut up, so that not a single ray even of sunlight could make its way in; and the jailors were ordered not to give them a bit of bread or a single drop of water for three whole days. So that, in addition to all the rest, the martyrs were condemned to a dark prison and a long privation of food. When the third day

arrived, about the beginning of the month of August, the prison was opened to admit light, but they were detained in it still up to the 10th of November. Then the judge had them brought up before his tribunal: Has not all this time, said he, sufficed to induce you to change your minds and come to some wholesome decision? They answered: We have already several times told thee our mind:

¹⁰ do, therefore, what thou hast been commanded. The governor forthwith ordered that Shamuna should be made to kneel down on one side and that an iron chain should be fastened on his knee. This having been done, he hung him up head downwards by the foot with which he had made him kneel; the other he pulled downwards with a heavy piece of iron, which cannot be described in words: thus endeavouring to rend the champion in twain. By this means the socket of the hip-bone was wrenched out of its place and Shamuna became lame. Guria, however, because he was weak and somewhat pale, he left unpunished: not that he regarded him with friendly eyes—not that he had any compassion on his weakness; but rather by way of sparing for another opportunity one whom he was anxious to punish: lest perchance, as he said, through inadvertence on my part he should be worn out before he has undergone the torments in reserve for him.

¹¹ By this time two hours of the day had passed since Shamuna had been hung up; and the fifth hour had now arrived, and he was still suspended on high—when the soldiers who stood around, taking pity upon him, urged him to obey the emperor's command. But the compassion of sinners had no effect upon the saint. For, although he suffered bitterly from the torture, he vouchsafed them no answer whatever, leaving them to lament at their leisure, and to deem themselves rather, and not him, deserving of pity. But, lifting his eyes to heaven, he prayed to God from the depth of his heart, reminding Him of the wonders done in old time: Lord God, he said, without whom not even a poor little sparrow falls into the snare; who didst cheer the heart of David amid his afflictions; who gavest power to Daniel even against the lions; who madest the children of Abraham victorious over the tyrant and the flame: do Thou now also, O Lord, look on the war which is being waged against us, acquainted as Thou art with the weakness of our nature. For the enemy is trying to turn away the workmanship of Thy right hand from the glory which is with Thee. But regard Thou us with looks of compassion, and maintain within us, against all attempts to extinguish it, the

lamp of Thy commandments; and by Thy light guide our paths, and vouchsafe us the enjoyment of that happiness which is in Thee: for Thou art blessed for ever, world without end. Thus did he utter the praise of the Umpire of the strife; and a scribe who was present took down in writing what was said.

¹² At length the governor ordered the jailor to release him from his punishment. He did so, and carried him away all faint and exhausted with the pain he suffered, and they bore him back to his former prison and laid him down by the side of the holy Guria. On the 15th of November, however, in the night, about the time of cock-crowing, the judge got up. He was preceded by torches and attendants; and, on arriving at the Basilica, as it is called, where the court was held, he took his seat with great ceremony on the tribunal, and sent to fetch the champions Guria and Shamuna. The latter came in walking between two of the jailors and supported by the hands of both: for he was worn out with hunger and weighed down with age: nothing but his good hope sustained him. Guria, too, had also to be carried in: for he could not walk at all, because his foot had been severely galled by the chain on it. Addressing them both, the advocate of impiety said: In pursuance of the permission which was granted, you have, doubtless, consulted together about what it is expedient for you to do. Tell me, then, whether any fresh resolution has been come to by you, and whether you have in any respect changed your mind in regard to your former purpose; and obey the command of the most divine emperor. For thus will you be restored to the enjoyment of your property and possessions, yea of this most cheering light also.

¹³ To this the martyrs reply: No one who is wise would make any great account of continuing for a little while in the enjoyment of things which are but transient. Sufficient for us is the time already past for the use and the sight of them; nor do we feel the want of any of them. That death, on the contrary, with which thou art threatening us will convey us to imperishable habitations and give us a participation in the happiness which is yonder.

¹⁴ The governor replied: What you have said has filled my ears with great sadness. However, I will explain to you what is determined on: if you place incense on the altar and sacrifice to the image of Jupiter, all will be well, and each of you will go away to his home; but, if you still persist in disobeying the command of the emperor, you will most certainly lose your heads: for this is what the great emperor wills and determines. To this the most noble-minded Shamuna replied: If thou shalt confer upon us so great a favour as to

grant us deliverance from the miseries of this life and dismissal to the happiness of the life yonder, so far as in us lies thou shalt be rewarded by Him who lays out our possessions on what is for our good. The governor replied to this somewhat kindly, as it seemed, saying: I have patiently endured hitherto, putting up with those long speeches of yours, in order that by delay you may change your purpose and betake yourselves to what is for your good, and not have to undergo the punishment of death. Those who submit, said he, to death which is only for a time, for the sake of Christ, will manifestly be delivered from eternal death. For those who die to the world live in Christ. For Peter also, who shines so brightly among the band of apostles, was condemned to the cross and to death; and James, the son of thunder was slain by Herod Agrippa with the sword. Moreover, Stephen also was stoned, who was the first to run the course of martyrdom. What, too, wilt thou say of John the Baptist? Thou wilt surely acknowledge his distinguished fortitude and boldness of speech, when he preferred death rather than keep silence about conjugal infidelity, and the adulteress received his head as a reward for her dancing?

¹⁵ Again the governor said: It is not that you may reckon up your saints, as you call them, that I bear so patiently with you, but that, by changing your resolution and yielding to the emperor's commands, you may be rescued from a very bitter death. For, if you behave with such excessive daring and arrogance, what can you expect but that severer punishments are in store for you, under the pressure of which you will be ready even against your will to do what I demand of you: by which time, however, it will be altogether too late to take refuge in compassion? For the cry which is wrung from you by force has no power to challenge pity; whilst, on the other hand, that which is made of your own accord is deserving of compassion. The confessors and martyrs of Christ said: There needs not many words. For lo! we are ready to undergo all the punishments thou mayest lay upon us. What, therefore, has been commanded thee, delay not to perform. For we are the worshippers of Christ the true God, and (again we say it) of Him of whose kingdom there shall be no end; who also is alone able to glorify those in return who glorify His name. In the meantime, whilst these things were being said by the saints, the governor pronounced sentence against them that they should suffer death by the sword. But they, filled with a joy, beyond the power of words to express, exclaimed: To Thee of right belongeth glory and praise, who art

God of all, because it hath pleased Thee that we should carry on to its close the conflict we have entered upon, and that we should also receive at Thy hands the brightness that shall never fade away.

¹⁶ When, therefore, the governor saw their unyielding firmness, and how they had heard the final sentence with exultation of soul, he said to the saints: May God search into what is being done, and be witness that so far as I was concerned it was no wish of mine that you should lose your lives; but the inflexible command of the emperor to me compels me to this. He then ordered a halberdier to take charge of the martyrs, and, putting them in a carriage, to convey them to a distance from the city with some soldiers, and there to end them with the sword. So he, taking the saints out at night by the Roman gate, when the citizens were buried in profound slumber, conveyed them to Mount Bethelablicla on the north of the city. On their arrival at that place, having alighted from the carriage with joy of heart and great firmness of mind, they requested the halberdier and those who were under his orders to give them time to pray; and it was granted. For, just as if their tortures and their blood were not enough to plead for them, they still by reason of their humility deemed it necessary to pray. So they raised their eyes to heaven and prayed earnestly, concluding with the words: God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, receive in peace our spirits to Thyself. Then Shamuna, turning to the halberdier, said: Perform that which thou hast been commanded. So he kneeled down along with Guria, and they were beheaded, on the 15th of November. This is the account of what happened to the martyrs.

¹⁷ But forasmuch as the number sought for a third in order that in them the Trinity might be glorified, it found, oh admirable providence! Habib—at a subsequent time indeed: but he also, along with those who had preceded him, had determined to enter on the journey, and on the very day of their martyrdom reached his consummation. Habib, then, great among martyrs, was a native of the same place as they, namely of the village of Thelsæa; and he had the honour of being invested with the sacred office of the diaconate. But, when Licinius swayed the sceptre of the Roman empire and Lysanias had appointed governor of Edessa, a persecution was again raised against the Christians, and the general danger threatened Habib. For he would go about the city, teaching the divine Scriptures to all he met with, and courageously seeking to strengthen them in piety. When this came to the ears of Lysanias,

he gave information of it to the Emperor Licinius. For he was anxious to be himself entrusted with the business of bringing the Christians to trial, and especially Habib: for he had never been entrusted with it before. The emperor, then, sent him a letter and commanded him to put Habib to death. So, when Lysanias had received the letter, search was made everywhere for Habib, who on account of his office in the Church lived in some part of the city, his mother and some of his relations residing with him.

¹⁸ When he got intelligence of the matter, fearing lest he should incur punishment for quitting the ranks of martyrdom, he went of his own accord and presented himself to a man who was among the chief of the body-guard, named Theotecnus, and presently he said: I am Habib for whom ye are seeking. But he, looking kindly at him, said: No one, my good man, is as yet aware of thy coming to me: so go away, and look to thy safety; and be not concerned about thy mother, nor about thy relations: for they cannot possibly get into any trouble. Thus far Theotecnus. ¹⁹ But Habib, because the occasion was one that called for martyrdom, refused to yield to a weak and cowardly spirit and secure his safety in any underhand way. He replied, therefore: It is not for the sake of my dear mother, nor for the sake of my kinsfolk, that I denounce myself; but I have come for the sake of the confession of Christ. For Lo! whether thou consent or no, I will make my appearance before the governor, and I will proclaim my Master Christ before princes and kings. Theotecnus, accordingly, apprehensive that he might go of his own accord to the governor, and that in this way he might himself be in jeopardy for not having denounced him, took Habib and conducted him to the governor: Here, said he, is Habib, for whom search has been made. When Lysanias learned that Habib had come of his own accord to the contest, he concluded that this was a mark of contempt and overweening boldness, as if he set light by the solemn dignity of the judicial seat; and he had him at once put on his trial. He inquired of him his condition of life, his name, and his country. On his answering that he was a native of the village of Thelsæa, and intimating that he was a minister of Christ, the governor immediately charged the martyr with not obeying the emperor's commands. He insisted that a plain proof of this was his refusal to offer incense to Jupiter.

²⁰ To this Habib kept replying that he was a Christian, and could not forsake the true God, or sacrifice to the lifeless works of men's hands which had

no sensation. The governor hereupon ordered, that his arms should be bound with ropes, and that he should be raised up high on a beam and torn with iron claws. The hanging up was far more difficult to bear than the tearing: for he was in danger of being pulled asunder, through the forcible strain with which his arms were stretched out. ²¹In the meantime, as he was hanging up in the air, the governor had recourse to smooth words, and assumed the guise of patience. He, however, continued to threaten him with severer punishments unless he should change his resolution. But he said: No man shall induce me to forsake the faith, nor persuade me to worship demons, even though he should inflict tortures more and greater. On the governor's asking him what advantage he expected to gain from tortures which destroyed his whole body, Habib, Christ's martyr, replied: The objects of our regard do not last merely for the present, nor do we pursue the things that are seen; and, if thou too art minded to turn thy look towards our hope and promised recompense, possibly thou wilt even say with Paul: "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed in us. The governor pronounced his words to be the language of imbecility; and, when he saw that, notwithstanding all the efforts he made, by turns using smooth words and assuming the part of patience, and then again threatening him and menacing him with a shocking death, he could not in either way prevail with him, he said, as he pronounced sentence upon him: I will not inflict on thee a sudden and speedy death; I will bring on thy dissolution gradually by means of a slow fire, and in this way make thee lay aside thy fierce and intractable spirit.

²² Thereupon, some wood was collected together at a place outside the city on the northward, and he was led to the pile, followed by his mother, and also by those who were otherwise by blood related to him. He then prayed, and pronounced a blessing on all, and gave them the kiss in the Lord; and after that the wood was kindled by them, and he was cast into the fire; and, when he had opened his mouth to receive the flame, he yielded up his spirit to Him who had given it. Then, when the fire had subsided, his relatives wrapped him in a costly piece of linen and anointed him with unguents; and, having suitably sung psalms and hymns, they laid him by the side of Shamuna and Guria, to the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, who constitute a Divine Trinity, which cannot be divided: to whom is due honour and worship now and always, and for evermore, Amen.

Such was the close of the life of the martyr Habib in the time of Licinius, and thus did he obtain the privilege of being laid with the saints, and thus did he bring to the pious rest from their persecutions. For shortly afterwards the power of Licinius waned, and the rule of Constantine prospered, and the sovereignty of the Romans became his; and he was the first of the emperors who openly professed piety, and allowed the Christians to live as Christians.

Extract from Moses of Chorene

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

CHAPTER 1

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. Moses of Chorene. History of Armenia. I. Reign of Abgar; Armenia becomes completely tributary to the Romans; war with Herod's troops; his brother's son, Joseph, is killed. Abgar, son of Archam, ascends the throne in the twentieth year of Archavir, king of the Persians. This Abgar was called Avak-air (great man), on account of his great gentleness and wisdom, and also on account of his size. Not being able to pronounce well, the Greeks and the Syrians called him Abgar. In the second year of his reign, all the districts of Armenia become tributary to the Romans. A command is given by the Emperor Augustus, as we are told in the Gospel of St. Luke, to number all the people in every part. Roman commissioners, sent for that purpose into Armenia, carried thither the statue of the Emperor Augustus, and set it up in all the temples. At this very time, our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world.

² At the same period there was trouble between Abgar and Herod: for Herod wished that his statue should be erected near to that of Cæsar in the temples of Armenia. Abgar withstood this claim. Moreover, Herod was but seeking a pretext to attack Abgar: he sent an army of Thracians and Germans to make an incursion into the country of the Persians, with orders to pass through the territories of Abgar. But Abgar, far from submitting to this, resisted, saying that the emperor's command was to march the troops into Persia through the desert. Herod, indignant, and unable to act by himself, overwhelmed with troubles, as a punishment for his wicked conduct towards Christ, as Josephus relates, sent his nephew to whom he had given his daughter, who had been married in the first instance to Phéror, his brother.

Herod's lieutenant, at the head of a considerable army, hastened to reach Mesopotamia, met Abgar at the camp in the province of Pouknan, fell in the combat, and his troops were put to flight. Soon afterwards, Herod died: Archelaus, his son, was appointed by Augustus ethnarch of Judæa.

CHAPTER 2

1 II. Founding of the town of Edessa; brief account of the race of our illuminator. A little while afterwards, Augustus dies, and Tiberius becomes emperor of the Romans in his stead. Germanicus, having become Cæsar, dragging in his train the princes of the kingdom of Archavir and of Abgar, celebrates a triumph in respect of the war waged with them, in which these princes had killed Herod's nephew. Abgar, indignant, forms plans of revolt and prepares himself for combat. He builds a town on the ground occupied by the Armenian army of observation, where previously the Euphrates had been defended against the attempts of Cassius: this new town is called Edessa. Abgar removed to it his court, which was at Medzpine, all his gods, Naboc, Bel, Patnicagh, and Tarata, the books of the schools attached to the temples, and even the royal archives. After this, Archavir being dead, Ardachès, his son, reigns over the Persians. Though it is not in the order of the history with respect to time, nor even the order according to which we have begun these annals, yet, as we are treating of descendants of the king Archavir, even of the blood of Ardachès his son, we will, to do honour to these princes, place them, by anticipating the time, near to Ardachès, in order that the reader may know that they are of the same race, of the race of the brave Archag; then we will indicate the time of the arrival of their fathers in Armenia, the Garenians and the Sourenians, from whom St. Gregory and the Gamsarians are descended, when, following the order of events, we come to the reign of the king under whom they appeared.

2 Abgar did not succeed in his plans of revolt; for, troubles having arisen amongst his relatives in the Persian kingdom, he set out at the head of an army to allay and bring to an end the dissension.

CHAPTER 3

1 III. Abgar comes into the East, maintains Ardachès upon the throne of Persia; reconciles his brothers from whom our illuminator and his relations are descended. Abgar, having gone to the East, finds on the throne of Persia Ardachès, son of Archavir, and the brothers of Ardachès contending against

him: for this prince thought to reign over them in his posterity, and they would not consent to it. Ardachès therefore hems them in on all sides, hangs the sword of death over their heads; distractions and dissension were between their troops and their other relations and allies: for King Archavir had three sons and one daughter; the first of these sons was King Ardachès himself, the second Garene, the third Sourene; their sister, named Gochm, was wife of the general of all the Ariks, a general chosen by their father Archavir. Abgar prevails on the sons of Archavir to make peace; he arranges between them the conditions and stipulations: Ardachès is to reign with his posterity as he proposed, and his brothers are to be called Bahlav, from the name of their town and their vast and fertile country, so that their satrapies shall be the first, higher in rank than all the satrapies of Persia, as being truly a race of kings. Treaties and oaths stipulated that in case of the extinction of male children of Ardachès, his brothers should come to the throne; after the reigning race of Ardachès, his brothers are divided into three races named thus: the race of Garene Bahlav, the race of Sourene Bahlav, and the race of their sister, the race of Asbahabied Bahlav, a race thus called from the name of the domain of her husband.

2 St. Gregory is said to have sprung from the race Sourene Bahlav, and the Gamsarians from the race Garene Bahlav. We will relate in the sequel the circumstances of the coming of these personages, only mentioning their names here in connection with Ardachès, in order that you may know that these great races are indeed the blood of Vagharchag, that is to say, the posterity of the great Archag, brother of Vagharchag. Everything being thus arranged, Abgar takes with him the letter of the treaties, and returns to his dominions; not in perfect health, but a prey to severe suffering.

CHAPTER 4

IV. Abgar returns from the east; he gives help to Aretas in a war against Herod the Tetrarch. When Abgar had returned from the East, he learnt that the Romans suspected him of having gone there to raise troops. He therefore made the Roman commissioners acquainted with the reasons of his journey to Persia, as well as the treaty concluded between Ardachès and his brothers; but no credence was given to his statement: for he was accused by his enemies Pilate, Herod the tetrarch, Lysanias and Philip. Abgar having returned to his city Edessa leagued himself with Aretas, king of Petra, and gave him some auxiliary troops under the command of Khosran Ardzrouni, to make war

upon Herod. Herod had in the first instance married the daughter of Aretas, then had repudiated her, and thereupon taken Herodias, even in her husband's lifetime, a circumstance in connection with which he had had John the Baptist put to death. Consequently there was war between Herod and Aretas on account of the wrong done the daughter of Aretas. Being sharply attacked, Herod's troops were defeated, thanks to the help of the brave Armenians; as if, by divine providence, vengeance was taken for the death of John the Baptist.

CHAPTER 5

V. Abgar sends princes to Marinus; these deputies see our Saviour Christ; beginning of the conversion of Abgar. At this period Marinus, son of Storoge, was raised by the emperor to the government of Phœnicia, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Abgar sent to him two of his principal officers, Mar-Ihap prince of Aghtznik, and Chamchacram chief of the house of the Abahouni, as well as Anan his confidant. The envoys proceed to the town of Petkoupine to make known to Marinus the reasons of Abgar's journey to the East, showing him the treaty concluded between Ardachès and his brothers, and at the same time to call upon Marinus for his support. The deputies found the Roman governor at Eleutheropolis; he received them with friendship and distinction, and gave this answer to Abgar: "Fear nothing from the emperor on that account, provided you take good care to pay the tribute regularly." On their return, the Armenian deputies went to Jerusalem to see our Saviour the Christ, being attracted by the report of His miracles. Having themselves become eye-witnesses of these wonders, they related them to Abgar. This prince, seized with admiration, believed truly that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, and said: "These wonders are not those of a man, but of a God. No, there is no one amongst men who can raise the dead: God alone has this power." Abgar felt in his whole body certain acute pains which he had got in Persia, more than seven years before; from men he had received no remedy for his sufferings; Abgar sent a letter of entreaty to Jesus: he prayed Him to come and cure him of his pains. Here is this letter:—

CHAPTER 6

¹ VI. Abgar's letter to the Saviour Jesus Christ. "Abgar, son of Archam, prince of the land, to Jesus, Saviour and Benefactor of men, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting:— "I have heard of Thee, and of the

cures wrought by Thy hands, without remedies, without herbs: for, as it is said, Thou makest the blind to see, the lame to walk, the lepers to be healed; Thou drivest out unclean spirits, Thou curest unhappy beings afflicted with prolonged and inveterate diseases; Thou dost even raise the dead. As I have heard of all these wonders wrought by Thee, I have concluded from them either that Thou art God, come down from heaven to do such great things, or that Thou art the Son of God, working as Thou dost these miracles. Therefore have I written to Thee, praying Thee to condescend to come to me and cure me of the complaints with which I am afflicted. I have heard also that the Jews murmur against Thee and wish to deliver Thee up to torments: I have a city small but pleasant, it would be sufficient for us both.”

² The messengers, the bearers of this letter, met Jesus at Jerusalem, a fact confirmed by these words of the Gospel: “Some from amongst the heathen came to find Jesus, but those who heard them, not daring to tell Jesus what they had heard, told it to Philip and Andrew, who repeated it all to their Master.” The Saviour did not then accept the invitation given to Him, but He thought fit to honour Abgar with an answer in these words:—

CHAPTER 7

VII. Answer to Abgar’s letter, which the apostle Thomas wrote to this prince by command of the Saviour. “Blessed is he who believes in me without having seen me! For it is written of me: ‘Those who see me will not believe in me, and those who do not see me will believe and live.’ As to what thou hast written asking me to come to thee, I must accomplish here all that for which I have been sent; and, when I shall have accomplished it all, I shall ascend to Him who sent me; and when I shall go away I will send one of my disciples, who will cure thy diseases, and give life to thee and to all those who are with thee.” Anan, Abgar’s courier, brought him this letter, as well as the portrait of the Saviour, a picture which is still to be found at this day in the city of Edessa.

CHAPTER 8

¹ VIII. Preaching of the apostle Thaddæus at Edessa; copy of five letters. After the ascension of our Saviour, the Apostle Thomas, one of the twelve, sent one of the seventy-six disciples, Thaddæus, to the city of Edessa to heal Abgar and to preach the Gospel, according to the word of the Lord. Thaddæus came to the house of Tobias, a Jewish prince, who is said to have been of

the race of the Pacradouni. Tobias, having left Archam, did not abjure Judaism with the rest of his relatives, but followed its laws up to the moment when he believed in Christ. Soon the name of Thaddæus spreads through the whole town. Abgar, on learning of his arrival, said: "This is indeed he concerning whom Jesus wrote to me;" and immediately Abgar sent for the apostle. When Thaddæus entered, a marvellous appearance presented itself to the eyes of Abgar in the countenance of the apostle; the king having risen from his throne, fell on his face to the earth, and prostrated himself before Thaddæus. This spectacle greatly surprised all the princes who were present, for they were ignorant of the fact of the vision. "Art thou really," said Abgar to Thaddæus, "art thou the disciple of the ever-blessed Jesus? Art thou he whom He promised to send to me, and canst thou heal my maladies?" "Yes," answered Thaddæus; "if thou believest in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the desires of thy heart shall be granted." "I have believed in Jesus," said Abgar, "I have believed in His Father; therefore I wished to go at the head of my troops to destroy the Jews who have crucified Jesus, had I not been prevented by reason of the power of the Romans."

² Thenceforth Thaddæus began to preach the Gospel to the king and his town; laying his hands upon Abgar, he cured him; he cured also a man with gout, Abdu, a prince of the town, much honoured in all the king's house. He also healed all the sick and infirm people in the town, and all believed in Jesus Christ. Abgar was baptized, and all the town with him, and the temples of the false gods were closed, and all the statues of idols that were placed on the altars and columns were hidden by being covered with reeds. Abgar did not compel any one to embrace the faith yet from day to day the number of the believers was multiplied. The Apostle Thaddæus baptizes a manufacturer of silk head-dresses, called Attæus, consecrates him, appoints him to minister at Edessa, and leaves him with the king instead of himself. Thaddæus, after having received letters patent from Abgar, who wished that all should listen to the Gospel of Christ, went to find Sanadroug, son of Abgar's sister, whom this prince had appointed over the country and over the army. Abgar was pleased to write to the Emperor Tiberius a letter in these words:—

³ Abgar's letter to Tiberius. "Abgar, king of Armenia, to my Lord Tiberius, emperor of the Romans, greeting:—" "I know that nothing is unknown to your Majesty, but, as your friend, I would make you better acquainted with the facts by writing. The Jews who dwell in the cantons of Palestine have

crucified Jesus: Jesus without sin, Jesus after so many acts of kindness, so many wonders and miracles wrought for their good, even to the raising of the dead. Be assured that these are not the effects of the power of a simple mortal, but of God. During the time that they were crucifying Him, the sun was darkened, the earth was moved, shaken; Jesus Himself, three days afterwards, rose from the dead and appeared to many. Now, everywhere, His name alone, invoked by His disciples, produces the greatest miracles: what has happened to myself is the most evident proof of it. Your august Majesty knows henceforth what ought to be done in future with respect to the Jewish nation, which has committed this crime; your Majesty knows whether a command should not be published through the whole universe to worship Christ as the true God. Safety and health.”

⁴ Answer from Tiberius to Abgar’s letter. “Tiberius, emperor of the Romans, to Abgar, king of the Armenians, greeting:— “Your kind letter has been read to me, and I wish that thanks should be given to you from me. Though we had already heard several persons relate these facts, Pilate has officially informed us of the miracles of Jesus. He has certified to us that after His resurrection from the dead He was acknowledged by many to be God. Therefore I myself also wished to do what you propose; but, as it is the custom of the Romans not to admit a god merely by the command of the sovereign, but only when the admission has been discussed and examined in full senate, I proposed the affair to the senate, and they rejected it with contempt, doubtless because it had not been considered by them first. But we have commanded all those whom Jesus suits, to receive him amongst the gods. We have threatened with death any one who shall speak evil of the Christians. As to the Jewish nation which has dared to crucify Jesus, who, as I hear, far from deserving the cross and death, was worthy of honour, worthy of the adoration of men—when I am free from the war with rebellious Spain, I will examine into the matter, and will treat the Jews as they deserve.”

⁵ Abgar writes another letter to Tiberius. “Abgar, king of the Armenians, to my lord Tiberius, emperor of the Romans, greeting:— “I have received the letter written from your august Majesty, and I have applauded the commands which have emanated from your wisdom. If you will not be angry with me, I will say that the conduct of the senate is extremely ridiculous and absurd: for, according to the senators, it is after the examination and by the suffrages of men that divinity may be ascribed. Thus, then, if God does not

suit man, He cannot be God, since God is to be judged and justified by man. It will no doubt seem just to my lord and master to send another governor to Jerusalem in the place of Pilate, who ought to be ignominiously driven from the powerful post in which you placed him; for he has done the will of the Jews: he has crucified Christ unjustly, without your order. That you may enjoy health is my desire.”

⁶ Abgar, having written this letter, placed a copy of it, with copies of the other letters, in his archives. He wrote also to the young Nerseh, king of Assyria, at Babylon:— Abgar’s letter to Nerseh. “Abgar, king of the Armenians, to my son Nerseh, greeting:— “I have received your letter and acknowledgments. I have released Beroze from his chains, and have pardoned his offences: if this pleases you, give him the government of Nineveh. But as to what you write to me about sending you the physician who works miracles and preaches another God superior to fire and water, that you may see and hear him, I say to you: he was not a physician according to the art of men; he was a disciple of the Son of God, Creator of fire and water: he has been appointed and sent to the countries of Armenia. But one of his principal companions, named Simon, is sent into the countries of Persia. Seek for him, and you will hear him, you as well as your father Ardachès. He will heal all your diseases and will show you the way of life.”

⁷ Abgar wrote also to Ardachès, king of the Persians, the following letter: — Abgar’s letter to Ardachès. “Abgar, king of the Armenians, to Ardachès my brother, king of the Persians, greeting:— “I know that you have heard of Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom the Jews have crucified, Jesus who was raised from the dead, and has sent His disciples through all the world to instruct men. One of His chief disciples, named Simon, is in your Majesty’s territories. Seek for him, and you will find him, and he will cure you of all your maladies, and will show you the way of life, and you will believe in his words, you, and your brothers, and all those who willingly obey you. It is very pleasant to me to think that my relations in the flesh will be also my relations, my friends, in the spirit.” Abgar had not yet received answers to these letters when he died, having reigned thirty-eight years.

CHAPTER 9

¹ IX. Martyrdom of our apostles. After the death of Abgar, the kingdom of Armenia was divided between two: Ananoun, Abgar’s son, reigned at Edessa, and his sister’s son, Sanadroug, in Armenia. What took place in their time

has been previously told by others: the apostle's arrival in Armenia, the conversion of Sanadroug and his apostasy for fear of the Armenian satraps, and the martyrdom of the apostle and his companions in the canton of Chavarchan, now called Ardaz, and the stone opening to receive the body of the apostle, and the removal of this body by his disciples, his burial in the plain, and the martyrdom of the king's daughter, Santoukhd, near the road, and the apparition of the remains of the two saints, and their removal to the rocks—all circumstances related by others, as we have said, a long time before us: we have not thought it important to repeat them here. In the same way also what is related of the martyrdom at Edessa of Attæus, a disciple of the apostle, a martyrdom ordered by Abgar's son, has been told by others before us.

² The prince who reigned after the death of his father, did not inherit his father's virtues: he opened the temples of the idols, and embraced the religion of the heathen. He sent word to Attæus: "Make me a head-dress of cloth interwoven with gold, like those you formerly used to make for my father." He received this answer from Attæus: "My hands shall not make a head-dress for an unworthy prince, who does not worship Christ the living God." Immediately the king ordered one of his armed men to cut off Attæus' feet. The soldier went, and, seeing the holy man seated in the chair of the teacher, cut off his legs with his sword, and immediately the saint gave up the ghost. We mention this cursorily, as a fact related by others a long while ago. There came then into Armenia the Apostle Bartholomew, who suffered martyrdom among us in the town of Arepan. As to Simon, who was sent unto Persia, I cannot relate with certainty what he did, nor where he suffered martyrdom. It is said that one Simon, an apostle, was martyred at Veriospore. Is this true, or why did the saint come to this place? I do not know; I have only mentioned this circumstance that you may know I spare no pains to tell you all that is necessary.

CHAPTER 10

¹ X. Reign of Sanadroug; murder of Abgar's children; the princess Helena. Sanadroug, being on the throne, raises troops with the help of the brave Pacradouni and Ardzrouni, who had exalted him, and goes to wage war upon the children of Abgar, to make him self master of the whole kingdom. Whilst Sanadroug was occupied with these affairs, as if by an effect of divine providence vengeance was taken for the death of Attæus; for a marble

column which the son of Abgar was having erected at Edessa, on the summit of his palace, while he was underneath to direct the work, escaped from the hands of the workmen, fell upon him and crushed his feet. Immediately there came a message from the inhabitants of the town, asking Sanadroug for a treaty by which he should engage not to disturb them in the exercise of the Christian religion, in consideration of which, they would give up the town and the king's treasures. Sanadroug promised, but in the end violated his oath. Sanadroug put all the children of the house of Abgar to the edge of the sword, with the exception of the daughters, whom he withdrew from the town to place them in the canton of Hachdiank. As to the first of Abgar's wives, named Helena, he sent her to his town at Kharan, and left to her the sovereignty of the whole of Mesopotamia, in remembrance of the benefits he had received from Abgar by Helena's means.

² Helena, pious like her husband Abgar, did not wish to live in the midst of idolaters; she went away to Jerusalem in the time of Claudius, during the famine which Agabus had predicted; with all her treasures she bought in Egypt an immense quantity of corn, which she distributed amongst the poor, a fact to which Josephus testifies. Helena's tomb, a truly remarkable one, is still to be seen before the gate of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 11

¹ XI. Restoration of the town of Medzpine; name of Sanadroug; his death. Of all Sanadroug's doings and actions, we judge none worthy of remembrance except the building of the town of Medzpine; for, this town having been shaken by an earthquake, Sanadroug pulled it down, rebuilt it more magnificently, and surrounded it with double walls and ramparts. Sanadroug caused to be erected in the middle of the town his statue holding in his hand a single piece of money, which signifies: "All my treasures have been used in building the town, and no more than this single piece of money is left to me." But why was this prince called Sanadroug? We will tell you: Because Abgar's sister, Otæa, while travelling in Armenia in the winter, was assailed by a whirlwind of snow in the Gortouk mountains; the tempest separated them all, so that none of them knew where his companion had been driven. The prince's nurse, Sanod, sister of Piourad Pacradouni, wife of Khosran Ardzrouni, having taken the royal infant, for Sanadroug was still in the cradle, laid him upon her bosom, and remained with him under the snow three days and three nights. Legend has taken possession of this circumstance: it

relates that an animal, a new species, wonderful, of great whiteness, sent by the gods, guarded the child. But so far as we have been informed, this is the fact: a white dog, which was amongst the men sent in search, found the child and his nurse; the prince was therefore called Sanadroug, a name taken from his nurse's name (and from the Armenian name, dourk, a gift), as if to signify the gift of Sanod.

² Sanadroug, having ascended the throne in the twelfth year of Ardachès, king of the Persians, and having lived thirty years, died as he was hunting, from an arrow which pierced his bowels, as if in punishment of the torments which he had made his holy daughter suffer. Gheroupna, son of the scribe Apchatar, collected all these facts, happening in the time of Abgar and Sanadroug, and placed them in the archives of Edessa.

The Story Concerning the King of Edessa

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

THE STORY CONCERNING THE KING OF EDESSA

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents Relating to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries. From the History of the Church. The Story Concerning the King of Edessa. Now the story relating to Thaddæus was on this wise:— While the Godhead of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ was proclaimed among all men by reason of the astonishing mighty-works which He wrought, and myriads, even from countries remote from the land of Judæa, who were afflicted with sicknesses and diseases of every kind, were coming to Him in the hope of being healed, King Abgar also, who was renowned among the nations on the east of the Euphrates for his valour, had his body wasting away with a grievous disease, such as there is no cure for among men. And when he heard and was informed of the name of Jesus, and about the mighty works which He did,—for every one alike bore witness concerning Him,—he sent a letter of request by a man belonging to him, and besought Him to come and heal him of his disease.

² But our Saviour at the time that he asked Him did not comply with his request. Yet He deigned to give him a letter in reply: for He promised him that He would send one of His disciples, and heal his sicknesses, and give salvation to him and to all who were connected with him. Nor did He delay to fulfil His promise to him: but after He was risen from the place of the dead, and was received into heaven, Thomas the apostle, one of the twelve, as by an impulse from God, sent Thaddæus, who was himself also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, to be a preacher and proclaimer of the teaching of Christ; and the promise of Christ was through him fulfilled. Thou hast in writing the evidence of these things, which is taken from the

Book of Records which was at Edessa: for at that time the kingdom was still standing. In the documents, then, which were there, in which was contained whatever was done by those of old down to the time of Abgar, these things also are found preserved down to the present hour. There is, however, nothing to prevent our hearing the very letters themselves, which have been taken by us from the archives, and are in words to this effect, translated from Aramaic into Greek.

³ Copy of the letter which was written by King Abgar to Jesus, and sent to Him by the hand of Hananias, the Tabularius, to Jerusalem:— “Abgar the Black, sovereign of the country, to Jesus, the good Saviour, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem: Peace. I have heard about Thee, and about the healing which is wrought by Thy hands without drugs and roots. For, as it is reported, Thou makest the blind to see, and the lame to walk; and Thou cleanseest the lepers, and Thou castest out unclean spirits and demons, and Thou healest those who are tormented with lingering diseases, and Thou raisest the dead. And when I heard all these things about Thee, I settled in my mind one of two things: either that Thou art God, who hast come down from heaven, and doest these things or that Thou art the Son of God, and doest these things. On this account, therefore, I have written to beg of Thee that Thou wouldest weary Thyself to come to me, and heal this disease which I have. For I have also heard that the Jews murmur against Thee, and wish to do Thee harm. But I have a city, small and beautiful, which is sufficient for two.”

⁴ Copy of those things which were written by Jesus by the hand of Hananias, the Tabularius, to Abgar, sovereign of the country:— “Blessed is he that hath believed in me, not having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that those who see me will not believe in me, and that those will believe who have not seen me, and will be saved. But touching that which thou hast written to me, that I should come to thee—it is meet that I should finish here all that for the sake of which I have been sent and, after I have finished it, then I shall be taken up to Him that sent me; and, when I have been taken up, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease, and give salvation to thee and to those who are with thee.” To these letters, moreover, is appended the following also in the Aramaic tongue:—

⁵ “After Jesus was ascended, Judas Thomas sent to him Thaddæus the apostle, one of the Seventy. And, when he was come, he lodged with Tobias,

son of Tobias. And, when the news about him was heard, they made it known to Abgar: "The apostle of Jesus is come hither, as He sent thee word." Thaddæus, moreover, began to heal every disease and sickness by the power of God, so that all men were amazed. And, when Abgar heard the great and marvellous cures which he wrought, he bethought himself that he was the person about whom Jesus had sent him word and said to him: When I have been taken up, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease. So he sent and called Tobias, with whom he was lodging, and said to him: I have heard that a mighty man has come, and has entered in and taken up his lodging in thy house: bring him up, therefore, to me. And when Tobias came to Thaddæus he said to him: Abgar the king has sent and called me, and commanded me to bring thee up to him, that thou mayest heal him. And Thaddæus said: I will go up, because to him have I been sent with power. Tobias therefore rose up early the next day, and took Thaddæus, and came to Abgar.

6 "Now, when they were come up, his princes happened to be standing there. And immediately, as he was entering in, a great vision appeared to Abgar on the countenance of Thaddæus the apostle. And, when Abgar saw Thaddæus, he prostrated himself before him. And astonishment seized upon all who were standing there: for they had not themselves seen that vision, which appeared to Abgar alone. And he proceeded to ask Thaddæus: Art thou in truth the disciple of Jesus the Son of God, who said to me, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thee and give thee salvation? And Thaddæus answered and said: Because thou hast mightily believed on Him that sent me, therefore have I been sent to thee; and again, if thou shalt believe on Him, thou shalt have the requests of thy heart. And Abgar said to him: In such wise have I believed on Him, that I have even desired to take an army and extirpate those Jews who crucified Him; were it not that I was restrained by reason of the dominion of the Romans. And Thaddæus said: Our Lord has fulfilled the will of His Father; and, having fulfilled it, has been taken up to His Father. Abgar said to him: I too have believed in Him and in His Father. And Thaddæus said: Therefore do I lay my hand upon thee in His name. And when he had done this, immediately he was healed of his sickness and of the disease which he had.

7 And Abgar marvelled, because, like as he had heard concerning Jesus, so he saw in deeds by the hand of Thaddæus His disciple: since without drugs

and roots he healed him; and not him only, but also Abdu, son of Abdu, who had the gout: for he too went in, and fell at his feet, and when he prayed over him he was healed. And many other people of their city did he heal, and he did great works, and preached the word of God. 8 “After these things Abgar said to him: Thou, Thaddæus, doest these things by the power of God; we also marvel at them. But in addition to all these things I beg of thee to relate to me the story about the coming of Christ, and in what manner it was; and about His power, and by what power He wrought those things of which I have heard. “And Thaddæus said: For the present I will be silent; but, because I have been sent to preach the word of God, assemble me tomorrow all the people of thy city, and I will preach before them, and sow amongst them the word of life; and will tell them about the coming of Christ, how it took place; and about His mission, for what purpose he was sent by His Father; and about His power and His deeds, and about the mysteries which He spake in the world, and by what power He wrought these things, and about His new preaching, and about His abasement and His humiliation, and how He humbled and emptied and abased Himself, and was crucified, and descended to Hades, and broke through the enclosure which had never been broken through before, and raised up the dead, and descended alone, and ascended with a great multitude to His Father.

9 “Abgar, therefore, commanded that in the morning all the people of his city should assemble, and hear the preaching of Thaddæus. And afterwards he commanded gold and silver to be given to him; but he received it not, and said: If we have forsaken that which was our own, how shall we accept that of others?” These things were done in the year 340. In order, moreover, that these things may not have been translated to no purpose word for word from the Aramaic into Greek, they are placed in their order of time here. Here endeth the first book.

The Teaching of Addæus the Apostle

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

THE TEACHING OF ADDÆUS THE APOSTLE

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. The Teaching of Addæus the Apostle. AAAAAAAAA
AAAA Addæus said to him: Because thou hast thus believed, I lay my hand upon thee in the name of Him in whom thou hast thus believed. And at the very moment that he laid his hand upon him he was healed of the plague of the disease which he had for a long time. And Abgar was astonished and marvelled, because, like as he had heard about Jesus, how He wrought and healed, so Addæus also, without any medicine whatever, was healing in the name of Jesus. And Abdu also, son of Abdu, had the gout in his feet; and he also presented his feet to him, and he laid his hand upon them, and healed him, and he had the gout no more. And in all the city also he wrought great cures, and showed forth wonderful mighty-works in it.

² Abgar said to him: Now that every man knoweth that by the power of Jesus Christ thou doest these miracles, and lo! we are astonished at thy deeds, I therefore entreat of thee to relate to us the story about the coming of Christ, in what manner it was, and about His glorious power, and about the miracles which we have heard that He did, which thou hast thyself seen, together with thy fellow-disciples. Addæus said: I will not hold my peace from declaring this; since for this very purpose was I sent hither, that I might speak to and teach every one who is willing to believe, even as thou. Assemble me tomorrow all the city, and I will sow in it the word of life by the preaching which I will address to you—about the coming of Christ, in what manner it was; and about Him that sent Him, why and how He sent Him; and about His power and His wonderful works; and about the glorious mysteries of His coming, which He spake of in the world; and about the unerr-

ing truth of His preaching; and how and for what cause He abused Himself, and humbled His exalted Godhead by the manhood which He took, and was crucified, and descended to the place of the dead, and broke through the enclosure which had never been broken through before, and gave life to the dead by being slain Himself, and descended alone, and ascended with many to His glorious Father, with whom He had been from eternity in one exalted Godhead.

³ And Abgar commanded them to give to Addæus silver and gold. Addæus said to him: How can we receive that which is not ours. For, lo! that which was ours have we forsaken, as we were commanded by our Lord; because without purses and without scrips, bearing the cross upon our shoulders, were we commanded to preach His Gospel in the whole creation, of whose crucifixion, which was for our sakes, for the redemption of all men, the whole creation was sensible and suffered pain. And he related before Abgar the king, and before his princes and his nobles, and before Augustin, Abgar's mother, and before Shalmath, the daughter of Meherdath, Abgar's wife, the signs of our Lord, and His wonders, and the glorious mighty-works which He did, and His divine exploits, and His ascension to His Father; and how they had received power and authority at the same time that He was received up—by which same power it was that he had healed Abgar, and Abdu son of Abdu, the second person of his kingdom; and how He informed them that He would reveal Himself at the end of the ages and at the consummation of all created things; also of the resuscitation and resurrection which is to come for all men, and the separation which will be made between the sheep and the goats, and between the faithful and those who believe not.

⁴ And he said to them: Because the gate of life is strait and the way of truth narrow, therefore are the believers of the truth few, and through unbelief is Satan's gratification. Therefore are the liars many who lead astray those that see. For, were it not that there is a good end awaiting believing men, our Lord would not have descended from heaven, and come to be born, and to endure the suffering of death. Yet He did come, and us did He send...of the faith which we preach, that God was crucified for all men.

⁵ And, if there be those who are not willing to agree with these our words, let them draw near to us and disclose to us what is in their mind, that, like as in the case of a disease, we may apply to their thoughts healing medicine for the cure of their ailments. For, though ye were not present at the time of

Christ's suffering, yet from the sun which was darkened, and which ye saw, learn ye and understand concerning the great convulsion which took place at that time, when He was crucified whose Gospel has winged its way through all the earth by the signs which His disciples my fellows do in all the earth: yea, those who were Hebrews, and knew only the language of the Hebrews, in which they were born, lo! at this day are speaking in all languages, in order that those who are afar off may hear and believe, even as those who are near. For He it is that confounded the tongues of the presumptuous in this region who were before us; and He it is that teaches at this day the faith of truth and verity by us, humble and despicable men from Galilee of Palestine. For I also whom ye see am from Paneas, from the place where the river Jordan issues forth, and I was chosen, together with my fellows, to be a preacher.

6 For, according as my Lord commanded me, lo! I preach and publish the Gospel, and lo! His money do I cast upon the table before you, and the seed of His word do I sow in the ears of all men; and such as are willing to receive it, theirs is the good recompense of the confession of Christ; but those who are not persuaded, the dust of my feet do I shake off against them, as He commanded me. Repent therefore, my beloved, of evil ways and of abominable deeds, and turn yourselves towards Him with a good and honest will, as He hath turned Himself towards you with the favour of His rich mercies; and be ye not as the generations of former times that have passed away, which, because they hardened their heart against the fear of God, received punishment openly, that they themselves might be chastised, and that those who come after them may tremble and be afraid. For the purpose of our Lord's coming into the world assuredly was, that He might teach us and show us that at the consummation of the creation there will be a resurrection of all men, and that at that time their course of conduct will be portrayed in their persons, and their bodies will be volumes for the writings of justice; nor will any one be there who is unacquainted with books, because every one will read that which is written in His own book.

7 Ye that have eyes, forasmuch as ye do not perceive, are yourselves also become like those who see not and hear not; and in vain do your ineffectual voices strain themselves to deaf ears. Whilst they are not to be blamed for not hearing, because they are by nature deaf and dumb, yet the blame which is justly incurred falls upon you, because ye are not willing to perceive—not

even that which ye see. For the dark cloud of error which overspreads your minds suffers you not to obtain the heavenly light, which is the understanding of knowledge. ⁸ Flee, then, from things made and created, as I said to you, which are only called gods in name, whilst they are not gods in their nature; and draw near to this Being, who in His nature is God from everlasting and from eternity, and is not something made, like your idols, nor is He a creature and a work of art, like those images in which ye glory. Because, although this Being put on a body, yet is He God with His Father. For the works of creation, which trembled when He was slain and were dismayed at His suffering of death,—these bear witness that He is Himself God the Creator. For it was not on account of a man that the earth trembled, but on account of Him who established the earth upon the waters; nor was it on account of a man that the sun grew dark in the heavens, but on account of Him who made the great lights; nor was it for a man that the just and righteous were restored to life again, but for Him who had granted power over death from the beginning; nor was it for a man that the veil of the temple of the Jews was rent from the top to the bottom, but for Him who said to them, “Lo, your house is left desolate. For, lo!

⁹ unless those who crucified Him had known that He was the Son of God, they would not have had to proclaim the desolation of their city, nor would they have brought down Woe! upon themselves. For, even if they had wished to make light of this confession, the fearful convulsions which took place at that time would not have suffered them to do so. For lo! some even of the children of the crucifiers are become at this day preachers and evangelists, along with my fellow-apostles, in all the land of Palestine, and among the Samaritans, and in all the country of the Philistines. The idols also of paganism are despised, and the cross of Christ is honoured, and all nations and creatures confess God who became man. ¹⁰ If, therefore, while Jesus our Lord was on earth ye would have believed in Him that He is the Son of God, and before ye had heard the word of His preaching would have confessed Him that He is God; now that He is ascended to His Father, and ye have seen the signs and the wonders which are done in His name, and have heard with your own ears the word of His Gospel, let no one of you doubt in his mind—so that the promise of His blessing which He sent to you may be fulfilled towards you: Blessed are ye that have believed in me, not having seen me; and, because ye have so believed in me, the town in which ye dwell shall be

blessed, and the enemy shall not prevail against it for ever. Turn not away, therefore, from his faith: for, lo! ye have heard and seen what things bear witness to His faith—showing that He is the adorable Son, and is the glorious God, and is the victorious King, and is the mighty Power; and through faith in Him a man is able to acquire the eyes of a true mind, and to understand that, whosoever worshippeth creatures, the wrath of justice will overtake him.

¹¹ For in everything which we speak before you, according as we have received of the gift of our Lord, so speak we and teach and declare it, that ye may secure your salvation and not destroy your spirits through the error of paganism: because the heavenly light has arisen on the creation, and He it is who chose the fathers of former times, and the righteous men, and the prophets, and spoke with them in the revelation of the Holy Spirit. For He is Himself the God of the Jews who crucified Him; and to Him it is that the erring pagans offer worship, even while they know it not: because there is no other God in heaven and on earth; and lo! confession ascendeth up to Him from the four quarters of the creation. Lo! therefore, your ears have heard that which was not heard by you; and lo! further, your eyes have seen that which was never seen by you.

¹² Be not, therefore, gainsayers of that which ye have seen and heard. Put away from you the rebellious mind of your fathers, and free yourselves from the yoke of sin, which hath dominion over you in libations and in sacrifices offered before carved images; and be ye concerned for your endangered salvation, and for the unavailing support on which ye lean; and get you a new mind, that worships the Maker and not the things which are made—a mind in which is portrayed the image of verity and of truth, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; believing and being baptized in the triple and glorious names. For this is our teaching and our preaching. For the belief of the truth of Christ does not consist of many things. And those of you as are willing to be obedient to Christ are aware that I have many times repeated my words before you, in order that ye might learn and understand what ye hear.

¹³ And we ourselves shall rejoice in this, like the husbandman who rejoices in the field which is blessed; God also will be glorified by your repentance towards Him. While ye are saved hereby, we also, who give you this counsel, shall not be despoiled of the blessed reward of this work. And, be-

cause I am assured that ye are a land blessed according to the will of the Lord Christ, therefore, instead of the dust of our feet which we were commanded to shake off against the town that would not receive our words, I have shaken off to-day at the door of your ears the sayings of my lips, in which are portrayed the coming of Christ which has already been, and also that which is yet to be; and the resurrection, and the resuscitation of all men, and the separation which is to be made between the faithful and the unbelieving; and the sore punishment which is reserved for those who know not God, and the blessed promise of future joy which they shall receive who have believed in Christ and worshipped Him and His exalted Father, and have confessed Him and His divine Spirit.

14 And now it is meet for us that I conclude my present discourse; and let those who have accepted the word of Christ remain with us, and those also who are willing to join with us in prayer; and afterwards let them go to their homes. And Addæus the apostle was rejoiced to see that a great number of the population of the city stayed with him; and they were but few who did not remain at that time, while even those few not many days after accepted his words and believed in the Gospel set forth in the preaching of Christ. And when Addæus the apostle had spoken these things before all the town of Edessa, and King Abgar saw that all the city rejoiced in his teaching, men and women alike, and heard them saying to him, “True and faithful is Christ who sent thee to us”—he himself also rejoiced greatly at this, giving praise to God; because, like as he had heard from Hanan, his Tabularius, about Christ, so had he seen the wonderful mighty-works which Addæus the apostle did in the name of Christ.

15 And Abgar the king also said to him: According as I sent to Christ in my letter to Him, and according as He also sent to me, so have I also received from thine own self this day; so will I believe all the days of my life, and in the selfsame things will I continue and make my boast, because I know also that there is no other power in whose name these signs and wonders are done but the power of Christ whom thou preachest in verity and in truth. And henceforth Him will I worship—I and my son Maanu, and Augustin, and Shalmath the queen. And now, wherever thou desirest, build a church, a place of meeting for those who have believed and shall believe in thy words; and, according to the command given thee by thy Lord, minister thou at the seasons with confidence; to those also who shall be with thee as teachers of

this Gospel I am prepared to give large donations, in order that they may not have any other work beside the ministry; and whatsoever is required by thee for the expenses of the building I myself will give thee without any restriction, whilst thy word shall be authoritative and sovereign in this town; moreover, without the intervention of any other person do thou come into my presence as one in authority, into the palace of my royal majesty.

¹⁶ And when Abgar was gone down to his royal palace he rejoiced, he and his princes with him, Abdu son of Abdu, and Garmai, and Shemashgram, and Abubai, and Meherdath, together with the others their companions, at all that their eyes had seen and their ears also had heard; and in the gladness of their heart they too began to praise God for having turned their mind towards Him, renouncing the paganism in which they had lived, and confessing the Gospel of Christ. And when Addæus had built a church they proceeded to offer in it vows and oblations, they and the people of the city; and there they continued to present their praises all the days of their life. And Avida and Barcalba, who were chief men and rulers, and wore the royal headband, drew near to Addæus, and asked him about the matter of Christ, requesting that he would tell them how He, though He was God, appeared to them as a man: And how, said they, were ye able to look upon Him? And he proceeded to satisfy them all about this, about all that their eyes had seen and about whatsoever their ears had heard from him. Moreover, everything that the prophets had spoken concerning Him he repeated before them, and they received his words gladly and with faith, and there was not a man that withstood him; for the glorious deeds which he did suffered not any man to withstand him.

¹⁷ Shavida, moreover, and Ebednebu, chiefs of the priests of this town, together with Piroz and Dilsu their companions, when they had seen the signs which he did, ran and threw down the altars on which they were accustomed to sacrifice before Nebu and Bel, their gods, except the great altar which was in the middle of the town; and they cried out and said: Verily this is the disciple of that eminent and glorious Master, concerning whom we have heard all that He did in the country of Palestine. And all those who believed in Christ did Addæus receive, and baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And those who used to worship stones and stocks sat at his feet, recovered from the madness of paganism wherewith they had been afflicted. Jews also, traders in fine raiment,

who were familiar with the law and the prophets—they too were persuaded, and became disciples, and confessed Christ that He is the Son of the living God.

¹⁸ But neither did King Abgar nor yet the Apostle Addæus compel any man by force to believe in Christ, because without the force of man the force of the signs compelled many to believe in Him. And with affection did they receive His doctrine—all this country of Mesopotamia, and all the regions round about it. ¹⁹ Aggæus, moreover, who made the silks and headbands of the king, and Palut, and Barshelama, and Barsamya, together with the others their companions, came to Addæus the apostle; and he received them, and associated them with him in the ministry, their business being to read in the Old Testament and the New, and in the prophets, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and to meditate upon them daily; strictly charging them to let their bodies be pure and their persons holy, as is becoming in men who stand before the altar of God. “And be ye,” said he, “far removed from false swearing and from wicked homicide, and from dishonest testimony, which is connected with adultery; and from magic arts, for which there is no mercy, and from sooth-saying, and divination, and fortune-tellers; and from fate and nativities, of which the deluded Chaldeans make their boast; and from the stars, and the signs of the Zodiac, in which the foolish put their trust. And put far from you unjust partiality, and bribes, and presents, through which the innocent are pronounced guilty. And along with this ministry, to which ye have been called, see that ye have no other work besides: for the Lord is the work of your ministry all the days of your life. And be ye diligent to give the seal of baptism. And be not fond of the gains of this world. And hear ye a cause with justice and with truth. And be ye not a stumbling-block to the blind, lest through you should be blasphemed the name of Him who opened the eyes of the blind, according as we have seen. Let all, therefore, who see you perceive that ye yourselves are in harmony with whatsoever ye preach and teach.”

²⁰ And they ministered with him in the church which Addæus had built at the word and command of Abgar the king, being furnished with supplies by the king and his nobles, partly for the house of God, and partly for the supply of the poor. Moreover, much people day by day assembled and came to the prayers of the service, and to the reading of the Old Testament, and the New of the Diatessaron. They also believed in the restoration of the dead,

and buried their departed in the hope of resuscitation. The festivals of the Church they also observed in their seasons, and were assiduous every day in the vigils of the Church. And they made visits of almsgiving, to the sick and to those that were whole, according to the instruction of Addæus to them. In the environs, too, of the city churches were built, and many received from him ordination to the priesthood. So that even people of the East, in the guise of merchants, passed over into the territory of the Romans, that they might see the signs which Addæus did. And such as became disciples received from him ordination to the priesthood, and in their own country of the Assyrians they instructed the people of their nation, and erected houses of prayer there in secret, by reason of the danger from those who worshipped fire and paid reverence to water.

21 Moreover, Narses, the king of the Assyrians, when he heard of those same things which Addæus the apostle had done, sent a message to Abgar the king: Either despatch to me the man who doeth these signs before thee, that I may see him and hear his word, or send me an account of all that thou hast seen him do in thy own town. And Abgar wrote to Narses, and related to him the whole story of the deeds of Addæus from the beginning to the end; and he left nothing which he did not write to him. And, when Narses heard those things which were written to him, he was astonished and amazed. Abgar the king, moreover, because he was not able to pass over into the territory of the Romans, and go to Palestine and slay the Jews for having crucified Christ, wrote a letter and sent it to Tiberius Cæsar, writing in it thus:—

22 King Abgar to our Lord Tiberius Cæsar: Although I know that nothing is hidden from thy Majesty, I write to inform thy dread and mighty Sovereignty that the Jews who are under thy dominion and dwell in the country of Palestine have assembled themselves together and crucified Christ, without any fault worthy of death, after He had done before them signs and wonders, and had shown them powerful mighty-works, so that He even raised the dead to life for them; and at the time that they crucified Him the sun became darkened and the earth also quaked, and all created things trembled and quaked, and, as if of themselves, at this deed the whole creation and the inhabitants of the creation shrank away. And now thy Majesty knoweth what it is meet for thee to command concerning the people of the Jews who have done these things. And Tiberius Cæsar wrote and sent to King Abgar; and thus did he write to him:—

23 The letter of thy Fidelity towards me I have received, and it hath been read before me. Concerning what the Jews have dared to do in the matter of the cross, Pilate the governor also has written and informed Aulbinus my proconsul concerning these selfsame things of which thou hast written to me. But, because a war with the people of Spain, who have rebelled against me, is on foot at this time, on this account I have not been able to avenge this matter; but I am prepared, when I shall have leisure, to issue a command according to law against the Jews, who act not according to law. And on this account, as regards Pilate also, who was appointed by me governor there—I have sent another in his stead, and dismissed him in disgrace, because he departed from the law, and did the will of the Jews, and for the gratification of the Jews crucified Christ, who, according to what I hear concerning Him, instead of suffering the cross of death, deserved to be honoured and worshipped by them: and more especially because with their own eyes they saw everything that He did. Yet thou, in accordance with thy fidelity towards me, and the faithful covenant entered into by thyself and by thy fathers, hast done well in writing to me thus.

24 And Abgar the king received Aristides, who had been sent by Tiberius Cæsar to him; and in reply he sent him back with presents of honour suitable for him who had sent him to him. And from Edessa he went to Thicuntha, where Claudius, the second from the emperor, was; and from thence, again, he went to Artica, where Tiberius Cæsar was: Caius, moreover, was guarding the regions round about Cæsar. And Aristides himself also related before Tiberius concerning the mighty-works which Addæus had done before Abgar the king. And when he had leisure from the war he sent and put to death some of the chief men of the Jews who were in Palestine. And, when Abgar the king heard of this, he rejoiced greatly that the Jews had received punishment, as it was right. And some years after Addæus the apostle had built the church in Edessa, and had furnished it with everything that was suitable for it, and had made disciples of a great number of the population of the city, he further built churches in the villages also—both those which were at a distance and those which were near, and finished and adorned them, and appointed in them deacons and elders, and instructed in them those who should read the Scriptures, and taught the ordinances and the ministry without and within.

25 After all these things he fell ill of the sickness of which he departed from this world. And he called for Aggæus before the whole assembly of the church, and bade him draw near, and made him Guide and Ruler in his stead. And Palut, who was a deacon, he made elder; and Abshelama, who was a scribe, he made deacon. And, the nobles and chief men being assembled, and standing near him—Barcalba son of Zati, and Maryhab son of Barshemash, and Senac son of Avida, and Piroz son of Patric, together with the rest of their companions—Addæus the apostle said to them:— “Ye know and are witness, all of you who hear me, that, according to all that I have preached to you and taught you and ye have heard from me, even so have I behaved myself in the midst of you, and ye have seen it in deeds also: because our Lord thus charged us, that, whatsoever we preach in words before the people, we should practise it in deeds before all men. And, according to the ordinances and laws which were appointed by the disciples in Jerusalem, and by which my fellow-apostles also guided their conduct, so also do ye—turn not aside from them, nor diminish aught from them: even as I also am guided by them amongst you, and have not turned aside from them to the right hand or to the left, lest I should become estranged from the promised salvation which is reserved for such as are guided by them.

26 “Give heed, therefore, to this ministry which ye hold, and with fear and trembling continue in it, and minister every day. Minister not in it with neglectful habits, but with the discreetness of faith; and let not the praises of Christ cease out of your mouth, nor let weariness of prayer at the stated times come upon you. Give heed to the verity which ye hold, and to the teaching of the truth which ye have received, and to the inheritance of salvation which I commit to you: because before the tribunal of Christ will ye have to give an account of it, when He maketh reckoning with the shepherds and overseers, and when He taketh His money from the traders with the addition of the gains. For He is the Son of a King, and goeth to receive a kingdom and return; and He will come and make a resuscitation to life for all men, and then will He sit upon the throne of His righteousness, and judge the dead and the living, as He said to us.

27 “Let not the secret eye of your minds be closed by pride, lest your stumbling-blocks be many in the way in which there are no stumbling-blocks, but a hateful wandering in its paths. Seek ye those that are lost, and direct those that go astray, and rejoice in those that are found; bind up the

bruised, and watch over the fatlings: because at your hands will the sheep of Christ be required. Look ye not for the honour that passeth away: for the shepherd that looketh to receive honour from his flock—sadly, sadly stands his flock with respect to him. Let your concern be great for the young lambs, whose angels behold the face of the Father who is unseen. And be ye not stones of stumbling before the blind, but clearers of the way and the paths in a rugged country, among the Jews the crucifiers, and the deluded pagans: for with these two parties have ye to fight, in order that ye may show the truth of the faith which ye hold; and, though ye be silent, your modest and decorous appearance will fight for you against those who hate truth and love falsehood.

28 “Buffet not the poor in the presence of the rich: for scourge grievous enough for them is their poverty. “Be not beguiled by the hateful devices of Satan, lest ye be stripped naked of the faith which ye have put on.”...“And with the Jews, the crucifiers, we will have no fellowship. And this inheritance which we have received from thee we will not let go, but in that will we depart out of this world; and on the day of our Lord, before the judgment-seat of His righteousness, there will He restore to us this inheritance, even as thou hast told us.” And, when these things had been spoken, Abgar the king rose up, he and his chief men and his nobles, and he went to his palace, all of them being distressed for him because he was dying. And he sent to him noble and excellent apparel, that he might be buried in it. And, when Addæus saw it, he sent to him, saying: In my lifetime I have not taken anything from thee, nor will I now at my death take anything from thee, nor will I frustrate the word of Christ which He spake to us: Accept not anything from any man, and possess not anything in this world.

29 And three days more after these things had been spoken by Addæus the apostle, and he had heard and received the testimony concerning the teaching set forth in their preaching from those engaged with him in the ministry, in the presence of all the nobles he departed out of this world. And that day was the fifth of the week, and the fourteenth of the month Iyar, nearly answering to May. And the whole city was in great mourning and bitter anguish for him. Nor was it the Christians only that were distressed for him, but the Jews also, and the pagans, who were in this same town. But Abgar the king was distressed for him more than any one, he and the princes of his kingdom. And in the sadness of his soul he despised and laid aside the mag-

nificence of his kingly state on that day, and with tears mingled with moans he bewailed him with all men. And all the people of the city that saw him were amazed to see how greatly he suffered on his account. And with great and surpassing pomp he bore him, and buried him like one of the princes when he dies; and he laid him in a grand sepulchre adorned with sculpture wrought by the fingers—that in which were laid those of the house of Ariu, the ancestors of Abgar the king: there he laid him sorrowfully, with sadness and great distress. And all the people of the church went there from time to time and prayed fervently; and they kept up the remembrance of his departure from year to year, according to the command and direction which had been received by them from Addæus the apostle, and according to the word of Aggæus, who himself became Guide and Ruler, and the successor of his seat after him, by the ordination to the priesthood which he had received from him in the presence of all men.

30 He too, with the same ordination which he had received from him, made Priests and Guides in the whole of this country of Mesopotamia. For they also, in like manner as Addæus the apostle, held fast his word, and listened to and received it, as good and faithful successors of the apostle of the adorable Christ. But silver and gold he took not from any man, nor did the gifts of the princes come near him: for, instead of receiving gold and silver, he himself enriched the Church of Christ with the souls of believers.

31 Moreover, as regards the entire state of the men and the women, they were chaste and circumspect, and holy and pure: for they lived like anchorites and chastely, without spot—in circumspect watchfulness touching the ministry, in their sympathy toward the poor, in their visitations to the sick: for their footsteps were fraught with praise from those who saw them, and their conduct was arrayed in commendation from strangers—so that even the priests of the house of Nebu and Bel divided the honour with them at all times, by reason of their dignified aspect, their truthful words, their frankness of speech arising from their noble nature, which was neither subservient through covetousness nor in bondage under the fear of blame. For there was no one who saw them that did not run to meet them, that he might salute them respectfully, because the very sight of them shed peace upon the beholden: for just like a net were their words of gentleness spread over the contumacious, and they entered within the fold of truth and verity. For there was no man who saw them that was ashamed of them, because they did

nothing that was not accordant with rectitude and propriety. And in consequence of these things their bearing was fearless as they published their teaching to all men. For, whatsoever they said to others and enjoined on them, they themselves exhibited in practice in their own persons; and the hearers, who saw that their actions went along with their words, without much persuasion became their disciples, and confessed the King Christ, praising God for having turned them towards Him.

³² And some years after the death of Abgar the king, there arose one of his contumacious sons, who was not favourable to peace; and he sent word to Aggæus, as he was sitting in the church: Make me a headband of gold, such as thou usedst to make for my fathers in former times. Aggæus sent to him: I will not give up the ministry of Christ, which was committed to me by the disciple of Christ, and make a headband of wickedness. And, when he saw that he did not comply, he sent and brake his legs as he was sitting in the church expounding. And as he was dying he adjured Palut and Abshelama: In this house, for whose truth's sake, lo! I am dying, lay me and bury me. And, even as he had adjured them, so did they lay him—inside the middle door of the church, between the men and the women. And there was great and bitter mourning in all the church, and in all the city—over and above the anguish and the mourning which there had been within the church, such as had been the mourning when Addæus the apostle himself died.

³³ And, in consequence of his dying suddenly and quickly at the breaking of his legs, he was not able to lay his hand upon Palut. Palut went to Antioch, and received ordination to the priesthood from Serapion bishop of Antioch; by which Serapion himself also ordination had been received from Zephyrinus bishop of the city of Rome, in the succession of the ordination to the priesthood from Simon Cephas, who had received it from our Lord, and was bishop there in Rome twenty-five years in the days of the Cæsar who reigned there thirteen years. And, according to the custom which exists in the kingdom of Abgar the king, and in all kingdoms, that whatsoever the king commands and whatsoever is spoken in his presence is committed to writing and deposited among the records, so also did Labubna, son of Senac, son of Ebedshaddai, the king's scribe, write these things also relating to Addæus the apostle from the beginning to the end, whilst Hanan also the Tabularius, a sharir of the kings, set-to his hand in witness, and deposited the writing among the records of the kings, where the ordinances and laws are

deposited, and where the contracts of the buyers and sellers are kept with care, without any negligence whatever.

³⁴ Here endeth the teaching of Addæus the apostle, which he proclaimed in Edessa, the faithful city of Abgar, the faithful king.

SYRIAC CALENDAR

¹ Syriac Calendar. A Note by the Translator.—The following list of the Syrian names of months, in use in the empire and during the era of the Seleucidæ, several of which have been mentioned in these Documents, is taken from Caswinii *Calendarium Syriacum*, edited in Arabic and Latin by Volck, 1859. The later Hebrew names also are here added for comparison. It must, however, be noticed that “the years employed in the Syrian Calendar, were, at least after the incarnation, Julian years, composed of Roman months.” (See *L’Art de vérifier les dates*: Paris, 1818, tom. i. p. 45.) The correspondence with the Hebrew months, therefore, is not so close as the names would indicate, since these commenced with the new moons, and an intercalary month, Veadar, following their twelfth month Adar, was added. Month / Syrian / Hebrew October / Tishri prior / Tishri, or Ethanim November / Tishri posterior / Bull, or Marcheshvan

² December / Canun prior / Chisleu January / Canun posterior / Tebeth February / Shubat / Shebat March / Adar / Adar April / Nisan / Nisan May / Ajar / Zif, or Iyar June / Chaziran / Sivan July / Tamuz / Tammuz August / Ab / Ab September / Elul / Elul

The Teaching of Simon Cephas in the City of Rome

DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF EDESSA

2nd–5th century

Old Syriac accounts of the conversion of Edessa and its martyrs.

THE TEACHING OF SIMON CEPHAS IN THE CITY OF ROME

¹ Ancient Syriac Documents. The Teaching of Simon Cephas in the City of Rome. In the third year of Claudius Cæsar, Simon Cephas departed from Antioch to go to Rome. And as he passed on he preached in the divers countries the word of our Lord. And, when he had nearly arrived there, many had heard of it and went out to meet him, and the whole church received him with great joy. And some of the princes of the city, wearers of the imperial headbands, came to him, that they might see him and hear his word. And, when the whole city was gathered together about him, he stood up to speak to them, and to show them the preaching of his doctrine, of what sort it was. And he began to speak to them thus:— ² Men, people of Rome, saints of all Italy, hear ye that which I say to you. This day I preach and proclaim Jesus the Son of God, who came down from heaven, and became man, and was with us as one of ourselves, and wrought marvellous mighty-works and signs and wonders before us, and before all the Jews that are in the land of Palestine. And you yourselves also heard of those things which He did: because they came to Him from other countries also, on account of the fame of His healing and the report of the marvellous help He gave; and whosoever drew near to Him was healed by His word. And, inasmuch as He was God, at the same time that He healed He also forgave sins: for His healing, which was open to view, bore witness of His hidden forgiveness, that it was real and trustworthy. For this Jesus did the prophets announce in their mysterious sayings, as they were looking forward to see Him and to hear His word: Him who was with His Father from eternity and from everlasting; God, who was

hidden in the height, and appeared in the depth; the glorious Son, who was from His Progenitor, and is to be glorified, together with His Father, and His divine Spirit, and the terrible power of His dominion. And He was crucified of His own will by the hands of sinners, and was taken up to His Father, even as I and my companions saw.

³ And He is about to come again, in His own glory and that of His holy angels, even as we heard Him say to us. For we cannot say anything which was not heard by us from Him, neither do we write in the book of His Gospel anything which He Himself did not say to us: because this word is spoken in order that the mouth of liars may be shut, in the day when men shall give an account of idle words at the place of judgment. ⁴ Moreover, because we were catchers of fish, and not skilled in books, therefore did He also say to us: "I will send you the Spirit, the Paraclete, that He may teach you that which ye know not;" for it is by His gift that we speak those things which ye hear. And, further, by it we bring aid to the sick, and healing to the diseased: that by the hearing of His word and by the aid of His power ye may believe in Christ, that He is God, the Son of God; and may be delivered from the service of bondage, and may worship Him and His Father, and glorify His divine Spirit. For when we glorify the Father, we glorify the Son also with Him; and when we worship the Son, we worship the Father also with Him; and when we confess the Spirit, we confess the Father also and the Son: because in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit, were we commanded to baptize those who believe, that they may live for ever.

⁵ Flee therefore from the words of the wisdom of this world, in which there is no profit, and draw near to those which are true and faithful, and acceptable before God; whose reward also is laid up in store, and whose recompense standeth sure. Now, too, the light has arisen on the creation, and the world has obtained the eyes of the mind, that every man may see and understand that it is not fit that creatures should be worshipped instead of the Creator, nor together with the Creator: because everything which is a creature is made to be a worshipper of its Maker, and is not to be worshipped like its Creator. But this One who came to us is God, the Son of God, in His own nature, notwithstanding that He mingled His Godhead with our manhood, in order that He might renew our manhood by the aid of His Godhead. And on this account it is right that we should worship Him, because He is to be worshipped together with His Father, and that we should not worship

creatures, who were created for the worship of the Creator. For He is Himself the God of truth and verity; He is Himself from before all worlds and creatures; He is Himself the veritable Son, and the glorious fruit which is from the exalted Father.

6 But ye see the wonderful works which accompany and follow these words. One would not credit it: the time lo! is short since He ascended to His Father, and see how His Gospel has winged its flight through the whole creation—that thereby it may be known and believed that He Himself is the Creator of creatures, and that by His bidding creatures subsist. And, whereas ye saw the sun become darkened at His death, ye yourselves also are witnesses. The earth, moreover, quaked when He was slain, and the veil was rent at His death. And concerning these things the governor Pilate also was witness: for he himself sent and made them known to Cæsar, and these things, and more than these, were read before him, and before the princes of your city. And on this account Cæsar was angry against Pilate because he had unjustly listened to the persuasion of the Jews; and for this reason he sent and took away from him the authority which he had given to him. And this same thing was published and known in all the dominion of the Romans. That, therefore, which Pilate saw and made known to Cæsar and to your honourable senate, the same do I preach and declare, as do also my fellow-apostles. And ye know that Pilate could not have written to the imperial government of that which did not take place and which he had not seen with his own eyes;

7 but that which did take place and was actually done—this it was that he wrote and made known. Moreover, the watchers of the sepulchre also were witnesses of those things which took place there: they became as dead men; and, when those watchers were questioned before Pilate, they confessed before him how large a bribe the chief-priests of the Jews had given them, so that they might say that we His disciples had stolen the corpse of Christ. Lo! then, ye have heard many things; and moreover, if ye be not willing to be persuaded by those things which ye have heard, be at least persuaded by the mighty-works which ye see, which are done by His name. 8 Let not Simon the sorcerer delude you by semblances which are not realities, which he exhibits to you, as to men who have no understanding, who know not how to discern that which they see and hear. Send, therefore, and fetch him to where all your city is assembled together, and choose you some sign for us to do before you; and, whichever ye see do that same sign, it will be your part to

believe in it. And immediately they sent and fetched Simon the sorcerer; and the men who were adherents of his opinion said to him: As a man concerning whom we have confidence that there is power in thee to do anything whatsoever, do thou some sign before us all, and let this Simon the Galilæan, who preaches Christ, see it. And, whilst they were thus speaking to him, there happened to be passing along a dead person, a son of one of those who were chiefs and men of note and renown among them. And all of them, as they were assembled together, said to him: Whichever of you shall restore to life this dead person, he is true, and to be believed in and received, and we will all follow him in whatsoever he saith to us. And they said to Simon the sorcerer: Because thou wast here before Simon the Galilæan, and we knew thee before him, exhibit thou first the power which accompanieth thee.

9 Then Simon reluctantly drew near to the dead person; and they set down the bier before him; and he looked to the right hand and to the left, and gazed up into heaven, saying many words: some of them he uttered aloud, and some of them secretly and not aloud. And he delayed a long while, and nothing took place, and nothing was done, and the dead person was lying upon his bier. And forthwith Simon Cephas drew near boldly towards the dead man, and cried aloud before all the assembly which was standing there: In the name of Jesus Christ, whom the Jews crucified at Jerusalem, and whom we preach, rise up thence. And as soon as the word of Simon was spoken the dead man came to life and rose up from the bier. And all the people saw and marvelled; and they said to Simon: Christ, whom thou preachest, is true. And many cried out, and said: Let Simon the sorcerer and the deceiver of us all be stoned. But Simon, by reason that every one was running to see the dead man that was come to life, escaped from them from one street to another and from house to house, and fell not into their hands on that day.

10 But the whole city took hold of Simon Cephas, and they received him gladly and affectionately; and he ceased not from doing signs and wonders in the name of Christ; and many believed in him. Cuprinus, moreover, the father of him that was restored to life, took Simon with him to his house, and entertained him in a suitable manner, while he and all his household believed in Christ, that He is the Son of the living God. And many of the Jews and of the pagans became disciples there. And, when there was great rejoicing at his teaching, he built churches there, in Rome and in the cities

round about, and in all the villages of the people of Italy; and he served there in the rank of the Superintendence of Rulers twenty-five years. And after these years Nero Cæsar seized him and shut him up in prison. And he knew that he would crucify him; so he called Ansus, the deacon, and made him bishop in his stead in Rome. And these things did Simon himself speak; and moreover also the rest, the other things which he had in charge, he commanded Ansus to teach before the people, saying to him: Beside the New Testament and the Old let there not be read before the people anything else: which is not right.

¹¹ And, when Cæsar had commanded that Simon should be crucified with his head downwards, as he himself had requested of Cæsar, and that Paul's head should be taken off, there was great commotion among the people, and bitter distress in all the church, seeing that they were deprived of the sight of the apostles. And Isus the guide arose and took up their bodies by night, and buried them with great honour, and there came to be a gathering-place there for many. And at that very time, as if by a righteous judgment, Nero abandoned his empire and fled, and there was a cessation for a little while from the persecution which Nero Cæsar had raised against them. And many years after the great coronation of the apostles, who had departed out of the world, while ordination to the priesthood was proceeding both in all Rome and in all Italy, it happened then that there was a great famine in the city of Rome.

¹² Here endeth the teaching of Simon Cephas.

PART THREE

The Age of the Great Persecution

Victorinus the commentator, Pamphilus the scholar and martyr, and Methodius, bishop and martyr.

Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John

VICTORINUS OF PETTAU

d. c. AD 304

Bishop and martyr; earliest Latin commentator on Revelation.

COMMENTARY ON THE APOCALYPSE OF THE BLESSED JOHN

From the First Chapter.

1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, and showed unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, and signified it. Blessed are they who read and hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things which are written." The beginning of the book promises blessing to him that reads and hears and keeps, that he who takes pains about the reading may thence learn to do works, and may keep the precepts. 4. "Grace unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." He is, because He endures continually; He was, because with the Father He made all things, and has at this time taken a beginning from the Virgin; He is to come, because assuredly He will come to judgment. "And from the seven spirits which are before His throne." We read of a sevenfold spirit in Isaiah, - namely, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, of knowledge and of piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

5. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead." In taking upon Him manhood, He gave a testimony in the world, wherein also having suffered, He freed us by His blood from sin; and having vanquished hell, He was the first who rose from the dead and "death shall have no more dominion over Him," but by His own reign the kingdom of the world is destroyed. 6. "And He made us a kingdom and priests unto God and His Father." That is to say, a Church of all believers; as also the Apostle Peter says: "A holy nation, a royal priesthood." 7. "Behold, He shall come with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." For He who at first came

hidden in the manhood that He had undertaken, shall after a little while come to judgment manifest in majesty and glory. And what saith He?

12. "And I turned, and saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." He says that He was like Him after His victory over death, when He had ascended into the heavens, after the union in His body of the power which He received from the Father with the spirit of His glory. 13. "As it were the Son of man walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks." He says, in the midst of the churches, as it is said in Solomon, "I will walk in the midst of the paths of the just," whose antiquity is immortality, and the fountain of majesty. "Clothed with a garment down to the ankles." In the long, that is, the priestly garment, these words very plainly deliver the flesh which was not corrupted in death, and has the priesthood through suffering.

"And He was girt about the paps with a golden girdle." His paps are the two testaments, and the golden girdle is the choir of saints, as gold tried in the fire. Otherwise the golden girdle bound around His breast indicates the enlightened conscience, and the pure and spiritual apprehension that is given to the churches. 14. "And His head and His hairs were white as it were white wool, and as it were snow." On the head the whiteness is shown; "but the head of Christ is God." in the white hairs is the multitude of abbots like to wool, in respect of simple sheep; to snow, in respect of the innumerable crowd of candidates taught from heaven. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." God's precepts are those which minister light to believers, but to unbelievers burning. 16. "And in His face was brightness as the sun." That which He called brightness was the appearance of that in which He spoke to men face to face. But the glory of the sun is less than the glory of the Lord. Doubtless on account of its rising and setting, and rising again, that He was born and suffered and rose again, therefore the Scripture gave this similitude, likening His face to the glory of the sun.

15. "His feet were like unto yellow brass, as if burned in a furnace." He calls the apostles His feet, who, being wrought by suffering, preached His word in the whole world; for He rightly named those by whose means the preaching went forth, feet. Whence also the prophet anticipated this, and said: "We will worship in the place where His feet have stood." Because where they first of all stood and confirmed the Church, that is, in Judea, all the saints shall assemble together, and will worship their Lord. 16. "And out of His mouth was

issuing a sharp two-edged sword. By the twice-sharpened sword going forth out of His mouth is shown, that it is He Himself who has both now declared the word of the Gospel, and previously by Moses declared the knowledge of the law to the whole world. But because from the same word, as well of the New as of the Old Testament, He will assert Himself upon the whole human race, therefore He is spoken of as two-edged. For the sword arms the soldier, the sword slays the enemy, the sword punishes the deserter. And that He might show to the apostles that He was announcing judgment, He says: "I came not to send peace, but a sword. And after He had completed His parables, He says to them: "Have ye understood all these things? And they said, We have. And He added, Therefore is every scribe instructed in the kingdom of God like unto a man that is a father of a family, bringing forth from his treasure things new and old," -the new, the evangelical words of the apostles; the old, the precepts of the law and the prophets: and He testified that these proceeded out of His mouth. Moreover, He also says to Peter: "Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that shall first come up; and having opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater (that is, two denarii), and thou shalt give it for me and for thee.

And similarly David says by the Spirit: "God spake once, twice I have heard the same. Because God once decreed from the beginning what shall be even to the end. Finally, as He Himself is the Judge appointed by the Father. on account of His assumption of humanity, wishing to show that men shall be judged by the word that He had declared, He says: "Think ye that I will judge you at the last day? Nay, but the word," says He, "which I have spoken unto you, that shall judge you in the last day. And Paul, speaking of Antichrist to the Thessalonians, says: "Whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth. And Isaiah says: "By the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. This, therefore, is the two-edged sword issuing out of His mouth. 15. "And His voice as it were the voice of many waters." The many waters are understood to be many peoples, or the gift of baptism that He sent forth by the apostles, saying: "Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

16. "And He had in His right hand seven stars. He said that in His right hand He had seven stars, because the Holy Spirit of sevenfold agency was given into His power by the Father. As Peter exclaimed to the Jews: "Being at the right hand of God exalted, He hath shed forth this Spirit received from the

Father, which ye both see and hear. Moreover, John the Baptist had also anticipated this, by saying to his disciples: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father," says he, "loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands. Those seven stars are the seven churches, which he names in his addresses by name, old calls them to whom he wrote epistles. Not that they are themselves the only, or even the principal churches; but what he says to one, he says to all. For they are in no respect different, that on that ground any one should prefer them to the larger number of similar small ones. In the whole world Paul taught that all the churches are arranged by sevens, that they are called seven, and that the Catholic Church is one. And first of all, indeed, that he himself also might maintain the type of seven churches, he did not exceed that number. But he wrote to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Thessalonians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians;

afterwards he wrote to individual persons, so as not to exceed the number of seven churches. And abridging in a short space his announcement, he thus says to Timothy: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the Church of the living God. We read also that this typical number is announced by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Isaiah: "Of seven women which took hold of one man. The one man is Christ, not born of seed; but the seven women are seven churches, receiving His bread, and clothed with his apparel, who ask that their reproach should be taken away, only that His name should be called upon them. The bread is the Holy Spirit, which nourishes to eternal life, promised to them, that is, by faith. And His garments wherewith they desire to be clothed are the glory of immortality, of which Paul the apostle says: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on mortality. Moreover, they ask that their reproach may be taken away-that is, that they may be cleansed from their sins: for the reproach is the original sin which is taken away in baptism, and they begin to be called Christian men, which is, "Let thy name be called upon us. Therefore in these seven churches, of one Catholic Church are believers, because it is one in seven by the quality of faith and election.

Whether writing to them who labour in the world, and live of the frugality of their labours, and are patient, and when they see certain men in the Church wasters, and pernicious, they hear them, lest there should become dissension, he yet admonishes them by love, that in what respects their faith

is deficient they should repent; or to those who dwell in cruel places among persecutors, that they should continue faithful; or to those who, under the pretext of mercy, do unlawful sins in the Church, and make them manifest to be done by others; or to those that are at ease in the Church; or to those who are negligent, and Christians only in name; or to those who are meekly instructed, that they may bravely persevere in faith; or to those who study the Scriptures, and labour to know the mysteries of their announcement, and are unwilling to do God's work that is mercy and love: to all he urges penitence, to all he declares judgment.

From the Second Chapter.

2. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience." In the first epistle He speaks thus: I know that thou sufferest and workest, I see that thou art patient; think not that I am staying long from thee. "And that thou canst not bear them that are evil, and who say that they are Jews and are not, and thou has found them liars, and thou hast patience for My name's sake." All these things tend to praise, and that no small praise; and it behoves such men, and such a class, and such elected persons, by all means to be admonished, that they may not be defrauded of such privileges granted to them of God. These few things He said that He had against them. 4, 5. "And thou hast left thy first love: remember whence thou hast fallen." He who falls, falls from a height: therefore He said whence: because, even to the very last, works of love must be practised; and this is the principal commandment. Finally, unless this is done, He threatened to remove their candlestick out of its place, that is, to disperse the congregation.

6. "This thou hast also, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes." But because thou thyself hatest those who hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, thou expectest praise. Moreover, to hate the works of the Nicolaitanes, which He Himself also hated, this tends to praise. But the works of the Nicolaitanes were in that time false and troublesome men, who, as ministers under the name of Nicolaus, had made for themselves a heresy, to the effect that what had been offered to idols might be exorcised and eaten, and that whoever should have committed fornication might receive peace on the eighth day. Therefore He extols those to whom He is writing; and to these men, being such and so great, He promised the tree of life, which is in the paradise of His God. The following epistle unfolds the mode of life and habit of another order which follows. He proceeds to say:-

9. "I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich." For He knows that with such men there are riches hidden with Him, and that they deny the blasphemy of the Jews, who say that they are Jews and are not; but they are the synagogue of Satan, since they are gathered together by Anti-christ; and to them He says:- 10. "Be thou faithful unto death." That they should continue to be faithful even unto death. 11. "He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death." That is, he shalt not be chastised in hell. The third order of the saints shows that they are men who are strong in faith, and who are not afraid of persecution; but because even among them there are some who are inclined to unlawful associations, He says:- 14-16. "Thou hast there some who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught in the case of Balak that he should put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat and to commit fornication. So also hast thou them who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes; but I will fight with them with the sword of my mouth." That is, I will say what I shall command, and I will tell you what you shall do. For Balaam, with his doctrine, taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the eyes of the children of Israel, to eat what was sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication,-a thing which is known to have happened of old. For he gave this advice to the king of the Moabites, and they caused stumbling to the people. Thus, says He, ye have among you those who hold such doctrine; and under the pretext of mercy, you would corrupt others.

17. "To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone." The hidden manna is immortality; the white gem is adoption to be the son of God; the new name written on the stone is "Christian." The fourth class intimates the nobility of the faithful, who labour daily, and do greater works. But even among them also He shows that there are men of an easy disposition to grant unlawful peace, and to listen to new forms of prophesying; and He reproves and warns the others to whom this is not pleasing, who know the wickedness opposed to them: for which evils He purposes to bring upon the head of the faithful both sorrows and dangers; and therefore He says:- 24. "I will not put upon you any other burden." That is, I have not given you laws, observances, and duties, which is another burden.

25, 26. "But that which ye have, hold fast until I come; and he that overcometh, to him will I give power over all peoples." That is, him I will appoint

as judge among the rest of the saints. 28. "And I will give him the morning star." To wit, the first resurrection. He promised the morning star, which drives away the night, and announces the light, that is, the beginning of day.

From the Third Chapter.

The fifth class, company, or association of saints, sets forth men who are careless, and who are carrying on in the world other transactions than those which they ought-Christians only in name. And therefore He exhorts them that by any means they should be turned away from negligence, and be saved; and to this effect He says:- 2. "Be watchful, and strengthen the other things which were ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." For it is not enough for a tree to live and to have no fruit, even as it is not enough to be called a Christian and to confess Christ, but not to have Himself in our work, that is, not to do His precepts. The sixth class is the mode of life of the best election. The habit of saints is set forth; of those, to wit, who are lowly in the world, and unskilled in the Scriptures, and who hold the faith immoveably, and are not at all broken down by any chance, or withdrawn from the faith by any fear. Therefore He says to them:-

8. "I have set before thee an open door, because thou hast kept the word of my patience." In such little strength. 10. "And I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." That they may know His glory to be of this kind, that they are not indeed permitted to be given over to temptation. 12. "He that overcometh shall be made a pillar in the temple of God." For even as a pillar is an ornament of the building, so he who perseveres shall obtain a nobility in the Church. Moreover, the seventh association of the Church declares that they are rich men placed in positions of dignity, but believing that they are rich, among whom indeed the Scriptures are discussed in their bedchamber, while the faithful are outside; and they are understood by none, although they boast themselves, and say that they know all things,-endowed with the confidence of learning, but ceasing from its labour. And thus He says:-

15. "That they are neither cold nor hot." That is, neither unbelieving nor believing, for they are all things to all men. And because he who is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, gives nausea, He says:- 16. "I will vomit thee out of My mouth." Although nausea is hateful, still it hurts no one; so also is it with men of this kind when they have been cast forth. But because there is time of repentance, He says:- 18. "I persuade thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire." That is, that in whatever manner you can, you should suffer for the

Lord's name tribulations and passions. "And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve." That what you gladly know by the Scripture, you should strive also to do the work of the same. And because, if in these ways men return out of great destruction to great repentance, they are not only useful to themselves, but they are able also to be of advantage to many, He promised them no small reward,-to sit, namely, on the throne of judgment.

From the Fourth Chapter.

"After this, I beheld, and, lo, a door was opened in heaven." The new testament is announced as an open door in heaven. "And the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me, saying, Come up hither." Since the door is shown to be opened, it is manifest that previously it had been closed to men. And it was sufficiently and fully laid open when Christ ascended with His body to the Father into heaven. Moreover, the first voice which he had heard when he says that it spoke with him, without contradiction condemns those who say that one spoke in the prophets, another in the Gospel; since it is rather He Himself who comes, that is the same who spoke in the prophets. For John was of the circumcision, and all that people which had heard the announcement of the Old Testament was edified with his word.

"That very same voice," said he, "that I had heard, that said unto me, Come up hither." That is the Spirit, whom a little before he confesses that he had seen walking as the Son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks. And he now gathers from Him what had been foretold in similitudes by the law, and associates with this scripture all the former prophets, and opens up the Scriptures. And because our Lord invited in His own name all believers into heaven, He forthwith poured out the Holy Spirit, who should bring them to heaven. He says:- 2. "Immediately I was in the Spirit." And since the mind of the faithful is opened by the Holy Spirit, and that is manifested to them which was also foretold to the fathers, he distinctly says:- "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven." The throne set: what is it but the throne of judgment and of the King?

3. "And He that sate upon the throne was, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone." Upon the throne he says that he saw the likeness of a jasper and a sardine stone. The jasper is of the colour of water, the sardine of fire. These two are thence manifested to be placed as judgments upon God's tribunal until the consummation of the world, of which judgments one is

already completed in the deluge of water, and the other shall be completed by fire. "And there was a rainbow about the throne." Moreover, the rainbow round about the throne has the same colours. The rainbow is called a bow from what the Lord spake to Noah and to his sons, that they should not fear any further deluge in the generation of God, but fire. For thus He says: I will place my bow in the clouds, that ye may now no longer fear water, but fire.

6. "And before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal." That is the gift of baptism which He sheds forth through His Son in time of repentance, before He executes judgment. It is therefore before the throne, that is, the judgment. And when he says a sea of glass like to crystal, he shows that it is pure water, smooth, not agitated by the wind, not flowing down as on a slope, but given to be immoveable as the house of God. "And round about the throne were four living creatures." The four living creatures are the four Gospels. 7-10. "The first living creature was like to a lion, and the second was like to a calf, and the third had a face like to a man, and the fourth was like to a flying eagle; and they had six wings, and round about and within they were full of eyes; and they had no rest, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord Omnipotent. And the four and twenty elders, falling down before the throne, adored God. The four and twenty elders are the twenty-four books of the prophets and of the law, which give testimonies of the judgment. Moreover, also, they are the twenty-four fathers-twelve apostles and twelve patriarchs. And in that the living creatures are different in appearance, this is the reason: the living creature like to a lion designates Mark, in whom is heard the voice of the lion roaring in the desert. And in the figure of a man, Matthew strives to declare to us the genealogy of Mary, from whom Christ took flesh. Therefore, in enumerating from Abraham to David, and thence to Joseph, he spoke of Him as if of a man: therefore his announcement sets forth the image of a man. Luke, in narrating the priesthood of Zacharias as he offers a sacrifice for the people, and the angel that appears to him with respect of the priesthood, and the victim in the same description bore the likeness of a calf. John the evangelist, like to an eagle hastening on uplifted wings to greater heights, argues about the Word of God.

Mark, therefore, as an evangelist thus beginning, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet; " The voice of one crying in the wilderness," -has the effigy of a lion. And Matthew, "The hook of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abra-

ham: " this is the form of a man. But Luke said, "There was a priest, by name Zachariah, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron: " this is the likeness of a calf. But John, when he begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," sets forth the likeness of a flying eagle. Moreover, not only do the evangelists express their four similitudes in their respective openings of the Gospels, but also the Word itself of God the Father Omnipotent, which is His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, bears the same likeness in the time of His advent. When He preaches to us, He is, as it were, a lion and a lion's whelp. And when for man's salvation He was made man to overcome death, and to set all men free, and that He offered Himself a victim to the Father on our behalf, He was called a calf. And that He overcame death and ascended into the heavens, extending His wings and protecting His people, He was named a flying eagle.

Therefore these announcements, although they are four, yet are one, because it proceeded from one mouth. Even as the river in paradise, although it is one, was divided into four heads. Moreover, that for the announcement of the New Testament those bring creatures had eyes within and without, shows the spiritual providence which both looks into the secrets of the heart, and beholds the things which are coming after that are within and without. 8. "Six wings. These are the testimonies of the books of the Old Testament. Thus, twenty and four make as many as there are elders sitting upon the thrones. But as an animal cannot fly unless it have wings, so, too, the announcement of the New Testament gains no faith unless it have the fore-announced testimonies of the Old Testament, by which it is lifted from the earth, and flies. For in every case, what has been told before, and is afterwards found to have happened, that begets an undoubting faith. Again, also, if wings be not attached to the living creatures, they have nothing whence they may draw their life. For unless what the prophets foretold had been consummated in Christ, their preaching was vain. For the Catholic Church holds those things which were both before predicted and afterwards accomplished. And it flies, because the living animal is reasonably lifted up from the earth. But to heretics who do not avail themselves of the prophetic testimony, to them also there are present living creatures; but they do not fly, because they are of the earth. And to the Jews who do not receive the announcement of the New Testament there are present wings; but they do not fly, that is, they

bring a vain prophesying to men, not adjusting facts to their words. And the books of the Old Testament that are received are twenty-four, which you will find in the epitomes of Theodore.

But, moreover (as we have said), four and twenty elders, patriarchs and apostles, are to judge His people. For to the apostles, when they asked, saying, "We have forsaken all that we had, and followed Thee: what shall we have?" our Lord replied, "When the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But of the fathers also who should judge, says the patriarch Jacob, "Dan also himself shall judge his people among his brethren, even as one of the tribes in Israel." 5. "And from the throne proceeded lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and seven torches of fire burning." And the lightnings, and voices, and thunders proceeding from the throne of God, and the seven torches of fire burning, signify announcements, and promises of adoption, and threatenings. For lightnings signify the Lord's advent, and the voices the announcements of the New Testament, and the thunders, that the words are from heaven. The burning torches of fire signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, that it is given by the wood of the passion. And when these things were doing, he says that all the elders fell down and adored the Lord; while the living creatures—that is, of course, the actions recorded in the Gospels and the teaching of the Lord—gave Him glory and honour. In that they had fulfilled the word that had been previously foretold by them, they worthily and with reason exult, feeling that they have ministered the mysteries and the word of the Lord. Finally, also, because He had come who should remove death, and who alone was worthy to take the crown of immortality, all for the glory of His most excellent doing had crowns.

10. "And they cast their crowns under His feet." That is, on account of the eminent glory of Christ's victory, they cast all their victories under His feet. This is what in the Gospel the Holy Spirit consummated by showing, For when about finally to suffer, our Lord had come to Jerusalem, and the people had gone forth to meet Him, some strewed the road with palm branches cut down, others threw down their garments, doubtless these were setting forth two peoples—the one of the patriarchs, the other of the prophets; that is to say, of the great men who had any kind of palms of their victories against sin, and cast them under the feet of Christ, the victor of all. And the palm

and the crown signify the same things, and these are not given save to the victor.

From the Fifth Chapter.

1. "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sate upon the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals." This book signifies the Old Testament, which has been given into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, who received from the Father judgment. 2, 3. "And I saw an angel full of strength proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no one was found worthy, neither in the earth nor under the earth, to open the book." Now to open the book is to overcome death for man. 4. "There was none found worthy to do this." Neither among the angels of heaven, nor among men in earth, nor among the souls of the saints in rest, save Christ the Son of God alone, whom he says that he saw as a Lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns. What had not been then announced, and what the law had contemplated for Him by its various oblations and sacrifices, it behoved Himself to fulfil. And because He Himself was the testator, who had overcome death, it was just that Himself should be appointed the Lord's heir, that He should possess the substance of the dying man, that is, the human members.

5. "Lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed. We read in Genesis that this lion of the tribe of Judah hath conquered, when the patriarch Jacob says, "Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee; thou hast lain down and slept, and hast risen up again as a lion, and as a lion's whelp. For He is called a lion for the overcoming of death; but for the suffering for men He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. But because He overcame death, and anticipated the duty of the executioner, He was called as it were slain. He therefore opens and seals again the testament, which He Himself had sealed. The legislator Moses intimating this, that it behoved Him to be sealed and concealed, even to the advent of His passion, veiled his face, and so spoke to the people; showing that the words of his announcement were veiled even to the advent of His time. For he himself, when he had read to the people, having taken the wool purpled with the blood of the calf, with water sprinkled the whole people, saying, "This is the blood of His testament who hath purified you. It should therefore be observed that the Man is accurately announced, and that all things combine into one. For it is not sufficient that that law is spoken of, but it is named as a testament.

For no law is called a testament, nor is any thing else called a testament, save what persons make who are about to die. And whatever is within the testament is sealed, even to the day of the testator's death. Therefore it is with reason that it is only sealed by the Lamb slain, who, as it were a lion, has broken death in pieces, and has fulfilled what had been foretold; and has delivered man, that is, the flesh, from death, and has received as a possession the substance of the dying person, that is, of the human members; that as by one body all men had fallen under the obligation of its death, also by one body all believers should be born again unto life, and rise again. Reasonably, therefore, His face is opened and unveiled to Moses; and therefore He is called Apocalypse, Revelation. For now His book is unsealed—now the offered victims are perceived—now the fabrication of the priestly chrism; moreover the testimonies are openly understood.

8, 9. "Twenty-four elders and four living creatures, having harps and phials, and singing a new song." The proclamation of the Old Testament associated with the New, points out the Christian people singing a new song, that is, bearing their confession publicly. It is a new thing that the Son of God should become man. It is a new thing to ascend into the heavens with a body. It is a new thing to give remission of sins to men. It is a new thing for men to be sealed with the Holy Spirit. It is a new thing to receive the priesthood of sacred observance, and to look for a kingdom of unbounded promise. The harp, and the chord stretched on its wooden frame, signifies the flesh of Christ linked with the wood of the passion. The phial signifies the Confession, and the race of the new Priesthood. But it is the praise of many angels, yea, of all, the salvation of all, and the testimony of the universal creation, bringing to our Lord thanksgiving for the deliverance of men from the destruction of death. The unsealing of the seals, as we have said, is the opening of the Old Testament, and the foretelling of the preachers of things to come in the last times, which, although the prophetic Scripture speaks by single seals, yet by all the seals opened at once, prophecy takes its rank.

From the Sixth Chapter.

1, 2. "And when the Lamb had opened one of the seven seals, I saw, and heard one of the four living creatures saying, Come and see. And, lo, a white horse, and He who sate upon him had a bow." The first seal being opened, he says that he saw a white horse, and a crowned horseman having a bow. For this was at first done by Himself. For after the Lord ascended into heaven

and opened all things, He sent the Holy Spirit, whose words the preachers sent forth as arrows reaching to the human heart, that they might overcome unbelief. And the crown on the head is promised to the preachers by the Holy Spirit. The other three horses very plainly signify the wars, famines, and pestilences announced by our Lord in the Gospel. And thus he says that one of the four living creatures said (because all four are one), "Come and see." "Come" is said to him that is invited to faith; "see" is said to him who saw not. Therefore the white horse is the word of preaching with the Holy Spirit sent into the world. For the Lord says, "This Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall come the end."

3, 4. "And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red, and to him that sate upon him was given a great sword." The red horse, and he that sate upon him, having a sword, signify the coming wars, as we read in the Gospel: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes in divers places." This is the ruddy horse. 5. "And when He had opened the third seal. I heard the third living creature saying, Come and see. And, lo, a black horse; and he who sate upon it had a balance in his hand." The black horse signifies famine, for the Lord says, "There shall be famines in divers places; "but the word is specially extended to the times of Antichrist, when there shall be a great famine, and when all shall be injured. Moreover, the balance in the hand is the examining scales, wherein He might show forth the merits of every individual. He then says:-

6. "Hurt not the wine and the oil." That is, strike not the spiritual man with thy inflictions. This is the black horse. 7, 8. "And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature saying, Come and see. And, lo, a pale horse; and he who sate upon him was named Death." For the pale horse and he who sate upon him bore the name of Death. These same things also the Lord had promised among the rest of the coming destructions-great pestilences and deaths; since, moreover, he says:- "And hell followed him." That is, it was waiting for the devouring of many unrighteous souls. This is the pale horse. 9. "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain. He relates that he saw under the altar of God, that is, under the earth, the souls of them that were slain. For both

heaven and earth are called God's altar, as saith the law, commanding in the symbolical form of the truth two altars to be made,-a golden one within, and a brazen one without. But we perceive that the golden altar is thus called heaven, by the testimony that our Lord bears to it; for He says, "When thou bringest thy gift to the altar" (assuredly our gifts are the prayers which we offer), "and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar. Assuredly prayers ascend to heaven. Therefore heaven is understood to be the golden altar which was within; for the priests also were accustomed to enter once in the year-as they who had the anointing-to the golden altar, the Holy Spirit signifying that Christ should do this once for all. As the golden altar is acknowledged to be heaven, so also by the brazen altar is understood the earth, under which is the Hades,-a region withdrawn from punishments and fires, and a place of repose for the saints, wherein indeed the righteous are seen and heard by the wicked, but they cannot be carried across to them.

He who sees all things would have us to know that these saints, therefore-that is, the souls of the slain-are asking for vengeance for their blood, that is, of their body, from those that dwell upon the earth; but because in the last time, moreover, the reward of the saints will be perpetual, and the condemnation of the wicked shall come, it was told them to wait. And for a solace to their body, there were given unto each of them white robes. They received, says he, white robes, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit. 12. "And I saw, when he had opened the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake." In the sixth seal, then, was a great earthquake: this is that very last persecution. "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." The sun becomes as sackcloth; that is, the brightness of doctrine will be obscured by unbelievers. "And the entire moon became as blood." By the moon of blood is set forth the Church of the saints as pouring out her blood for Christ. 13. "And the stars fell to the earth." The falling of the stars are the faithful who are troubled for Christ's sake. "Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs." The fig-tree, when shaken, loses its untimely figs-when men are separated from the Church by persecution. 14. "And the heaven withdrew as a scroll that is rolled up." For the heaven to be rolled away, that is, that the Church shall be taken away.

"And every mountain and the islands were moved from their places." Mountains and islands removed from their places intimate that in the last

persecution all men departed from their places; that is, that the good will be removed, seeking to avoid the persecution.

From the Seventh Chapter.

2. "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God" He speaks of Elias the prophet, who is the precursor of the times of Antichrist, for the restoration and establishment of the churches from the great and intolerable persecution. We read that these things are predicted in the opening of the Old and New Testament; for He says by Malachi: "Lo, I will send to you Elias the Tishbite, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, according to the time of calling, to recall the Jews to the faith of the people that succeed them. And to that end He shows, as we have said, that the number of those that shall believe, of the Jews and of the nations, is a great multitude which no man was able to number. Moreover, we read in the Gospel that the prayers of the Church are sent from heaven by an angel, and that they are received against wrath, and that the kingdom of Antichrist is cast out and extinguished by holy angels; for He says: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation: for there shall be a great affliction, such as has not been from the beginning of the world; and except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved. Therefore He shall send these seven great archangels to smite the kingdom of Antichrist; for He Himself also thus said: "Then the Son of man shall send His messengers;

and they shall gather together His elect from the four corners of the wind, from the one end of heaven even to the other end thereof. For, moreover, He previously says by the prophet: "Then shall there be peace for our land, when there shall arise in it seven shepherds and eight attacks of men; and they shall encircle Assur," that is, Antichrist, "in the trench of Nimrod," that is, in the nation of the devil, by the spirit of the Church. Similarly when the keepers of the house shall be moved. Moreover, the Lord Himself, in the parable to the apostles, when the labourers had come to Him and said, "Lord, did not we sow good seed in Thy field? whence, then, hath it tares? answered them, An enemy hath done this. And they said to Him, Lord, wilt Thou, then, that we go and root them up? And He said, Nay, but let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, that they gather the tares and make bundles of them, and burn them with fire everlasting, but that they gather the wheat into my barns. The Apocalypse here shows, therefore, that these reapers, and shep-

herds, and labourers, are the angels. And the trumpet is the word of power. And although the same thing recurs in the phials, still it is not said as if it occurred twice, but because what is decreed by the Lord to happen shall be once for all;

for this cause it is said twice. What, therefore, He said too little in the trumpets, is here found in the phials. We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had before failed to say. Nor must we look for order in the Apocalypse; but we must follow the meaning of those things which are prophesied. Therefore in the trumpets and phials is signified either the desolation of the plagues that are sent upon the earth, or the madness of Antichrist himself, or the cutting off of the peoples, or the diversity of the plagues, or the hope in the kingdom of the saints, or the ruin of states, or the great overthrow of Babylon, that is, the Roman state.

9. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man was able to number, of every nation, tribe, and people, and tongue, clothed with white robes." What the great multitude out of every tribe implies, is to show the number of the elect out of all believers, who, being cleansed by baptism in the blood of the Lamb, have made their robes white, keeping the grace which they have received.

From the Eighth Chapter.

1. "And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour." Whereby is signified the beginning of everlasting rest; but it is described as partial, because the silence being interrupted, he repeats it in order. For if the silence had continued, here would be an end of his narrative. 13 "And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven." By the angel flying through the midst of heaven is signified the Holy Spirit bearing witness in two of the prophets that a great wrath of plagues was imminent. If by any means, even in the last times, any one should be willing to be converted, any one might even still be saved.

From the Ninth Chapter.

13, 14. "And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is in the presence of God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels." That is, the four corners of the earth which hold the

four winds. "Which are bound in the great river Euphrates." By the corners of the earth, or the four winds across the river Euphrates, are meant four nations, because to every nation is sent an angel; as said the law, "He determined them by the number of the angels of God," until the number of the saints should be filled up. They do not overpass their bounds, because at the last they shall come with Antichrist.

From the Tenth Chapter.

1, 2. "I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand an open book: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth." He signifies that that mighty angel who, he says, descended from heaven, clothed with a cloud, is our Lord, as we have above narrated. "His face was as it were the sun." That is, with respect to the resurrection. "Upon his head was a rainbow." He points to the judgment which is executed by Him, of shall be. "An open book." A revelation of works in the future judgment, or the Apocalypse which John received. "His feet," as we have said above, are the apostles. For that both things in sea and land are trodden under foot by Him, signifies that all things are placed under His feet. Moreover, he calls Him an angel, that is, a messenger, to wit, of the Father; for He is called the Messenger of great counsel. He says also that He cried with a loud voice. The great voice is to tell the words of the Omnipotent God of heaven to men, and to bear witness that after penitence is closed there will be no hope subsequently.

3. "Seven thunders uttered their voices." The seven thunders uttering their voices signify, the Holy Spirit of sevenfold power, who through the prophets announced all things to come, and by His voice John gave his testimony in the world; but because he says that he was about to write the things which the thunders had uttered, that is, whatever things had been obscure in the announcements of the Old Testament; he is forbidden to write them, but he was charged to leave them sealed, because he is an apostle, nor was it fitting that the grace of the subsequent stage should be given in the first. "The time," says he, "is at hand." For the apostles, by powers, by signs, by portents, and by mighty works, have overcome unbelief. After them there is now given to the same completed Churches the comfort of having the prophetic Scriptures subsequently interpreted, for I said that after the apostles there would be interpreting prophets.

For the apostle says: "And he placed in the Church indeed, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers," and the rest. And in another place he says: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge." And he says: "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head" And when he says, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge," he is not speaking in respect of the Catholic prophecy of things unheard and unknown, but of things both announced and known. But let them judge whether or not the interpretation is consistent with the testimonies of the prophetic utterance. It is plain, therefore, that to John, armed as he was with superior virtue, this was not necessary, although the body of Christ, which is the Church, adorned with His members, ought to respond to its position. 10. "I took the book from the hand of the angel, and ate it up." To take the book and eat it up, is, when exhibition of a thing is made to one, to commit it to memory.

"And it was in my mouth as sweet as honey." To be sweet in the mouth is the reward of the preaching of the speaker, and is most pleasant to the hearers; but it is most bitter both to those that announce it, and to those that persevere in its commandments through suffering. 11. "And He says unto me, Thou must again prophesy to the peoples, and to the tongues, and to the nations, and to many kings." He says this, because when John said these things he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines by Caesar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the Apocalypse; and when grown old, he thought that he should at length receive his quittance by suffering, Domitian being killed, all his judgments were discharged. And John being dismissed from the mines, thus subsequently delivered the same Apocalypse which he had received from God. This, therefore, is what He says: Thou must again prophesy to all nations, because thou seest the crowds of Antichrist rise up; and against them other crowds shall stand, and they shall fall by the sword on the one side and on the other.

From the Eleventh Chapter.

1. "And there was shown unto me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." A reed was shown like to a rod. This itself is the Apocalypse which he subsequently exhibited to the churches; for the Gospel of the complete faith he subsequently wrote for the sake of our salvation. For when Valentinus, and Cerinthus, and Ebion, and others of the school of Satan,

were scattered abroad throughout the world, there assembled together to him from the neighbouring provinces all the bishops, and compelled him himself also to draw up his testimony. Moreover, we say that the measure of God's temple is the command of God to confess the Father Almighty, and that His Son Christ was begotten by the Father before the beginning of the world, and was made man in very soul and flesh, both of them having overcome misery and death; and that, when received with His body into heaven by the Father, He shed forth the Holy Spirit, the gift and pledge of immortality, that He was announced by the prophets, He was described by the law, He was God's hand, and the Word of the Father from God, Lord over all, and founder of the world: this is the reed and the measure of faith; and no one worships the holy altar save he who confesses this faith.

2. "The court which is within the temple leave out." The space which is called the court is the empty altar within the walls: these being such as were not necessary, he commanded to be ejected from the Church. "It is given to be trodden down by the Gentiles." That is, to the men of this world, that it may be trodden under foot by the nations, or with the nations. Then he repeats about the destruction and slaughter of the last time, and says:- 3. "They shall tread the holy city down for forty and two months; and I will give to my two witnesses, and they shall predict a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth." That is, three years and six months: these make forty-two months. Therefore their preaching is three years and six months, and the kingdom of Antichrist as much again. 5. "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies." That fire proceedeth out of the mouth of those prophets against the adversaries, bespeaks the power of the world. For all afflictions, however many there are, shall be sent by their messengers in their word. Many think that there is Elisha, or Moses, with Elijah; but both of these died; while the death of Elijah is not heard of, with whom all our ancients have believed that it was Jeremiah. For even the very word spoken to him testifies to him, saying, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." But he was not a prophet unto the nations; and thus the truthful word of God makes it necessary, which it has promised to set forth, that he should be a prophet to the nations.

4. "These are the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth." These two candlesticks and two olive trees He has to this end spoken of, and admonished you that if, when you have read of them elsewhere, you have not understood, you may understand here. For in Zechariah, one of the twelve prophets, it is thus written: "These are the two olive trees and two candlesticks which stand in the presence of the Lord of the earth; " that is, they are in paradise. Also, in another sense, standing in the presence of the lord of the earth, that is, in the presence of Antichrist. Therefore they must be slain by Antichrist. 7. "And the beast which ascendeth from the abyss. After many plagues completed in the world, in the end he says that a beast ascended from the abyss. But that he shall ascend from the abyss is proved by many testimonies; for he says in the thirty-first chapter of Ezekiel: "Behold, Assur was a cypress in Mount Lebanon. Assur, deeply rooted, was a lofty and branching cypress-that is, a numerous people-in Mount Lebanon, in the kingdom of kingdoms, that is, of the Romans. Moreover, that he says he was beautiful in offshoots, he says he was strong in armies. The water, he says, shall nourish him, that is, the many thousands of men which were subjected to him; and the abyss increased him, that is, belched him forth. For even Isaiah speaks almost in the same words; moreover, that he was in the kingdom of the Romans, and that he was among the Caesars. The Apostle Paul also bears witness, for he says to the Thessalonians: "Let him who now restraineth restrain, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall appear that Wicked One, even he whose coining is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders. And that they might know that he should come who then was the prince, he added: "He already endeavours after the secret of mischief" -that is, the mischief which he is about to do he strives to do secretly;

but he is not raised up by his own power, nor by that of his father, but by command of God, of which thing Paul says in the same passage: "For this cause, because they have not received the love of God, He will send upon them a spirit of error, that they all may be persuaded of a lie, who have not been persuaded of the truth. And Isaiah saith: "While they waited for the light, darkness arose upon them. Therefore the Apocalypse sets forth that these prophets are killed by the same, and on the fourth day rise again, that none might be found equal to God. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." But He calls Jerusalem Sodom and Egypt, since it had become the heaping up of the

persecuting people. Therefore it behoves us diligently, and with the utmost care, to follow the prophetic announcement, and to understand what the Spirit from the Father both announces and anticipates, and how, when He has gone forward to the last times, He again repeats the former ones. And now, what He will do once for all, He sometimes sets forth as if it were done; and unless you understand this, as sometimes done, and sometimes as about to be done, you will fall into a great confusion. Therefore the interpretation of the following sayings has shown therein, that not the order of the reading, but the order of the discourse, must be understood.

19. "And the temple of God was opened which is in heaven." The temple opened is a manifestation of our Lord. For the temple of God is the Son, as He Himself says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And when the Jews said, "Forty and six years was this temple in building," the evangelist says, "He spake of the temple of His body." "And there was seen in His temple the ark of the Lord's testament." The preaching of the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins, and all the gifts whatever that came with Him, he says, appeared therein.

From the Twelfth Chapter.

1. "And there was seen a great sign in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried out travailing, and bearing torments that she might bring forth." The woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and wearing a crown of twelve stars upon her head, and travelling in her pains, is the ancient Church of fathers, and prophets, and saints, and apostles, which had the groans and torments of its longing until it saw that Christ, the fruit of its people according to the flesh long promised to it, had taken flesh out of the selfsame people. Moreover, being clothed with the sun intimates the hope of resurrection and the glory of the promise. And the moon intimates the fall of the bodies of the saints under the obligation of death, which never can fail. For even as life is diminished, so also it is increased. Nor is the hope of those that sleep extinguished absolutely, as some think, but they have in their darkness a light such as the moon. And the crown of twelve stars signifies the choir of fathers, according to the fleshly birth, of whom Christ was to take flesh.

3. "And there appeared another sign in heaven; and behold a red dragon, having seven heads." Now, that he says that this dragon was of a red colour-

that is, of a purple colour-the result of his work gave him such a colour. For from the beginning (as the Lord says) he was a murderer; and he has oppressed the whole of the human race, not so much by the obligation of death, as, moreover, by the various forms of destruction and fatal mischiefs. His seven heads were the seven kings of the Romans, of whom also is Antichrist, as we have said above. "And ten horns." He says that the ten kings in the latest times are the same as these, as we shall more fully set forth there. 4. "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them upon the earth." Now, that he says that the dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, this may be taken in two ways. For many think that he may be able to seduce the third part of the men who believe. But it should more truly be understood, that of the angels that were subject to him, since he was still a prince when he descended from his estate, he seduced the third part; therefore what we said above, the Apocalypse says.

"And the dragon stood before the woman who was beginning to bring forth, that, when she had brought forth, he might devour her child." The red dragon standing and desiring to devour her child when she had brought him forth, is the devil,-to wit, the traitor angel, who thought that the perishing of all men would be alike by death; but He, who was not born of seed, owed nothing to death: wherefore he could not devour Him-that is, detain Him in death-for on the third day He rose again. Finally, also, and before He suffered, he approached to tempt Him as man; but when he found that He was not what he thought Him to be, he departed from Him, even till the time. Whence it is here said:- 5. "And she brought forth a son, who begins to rule all nations with a rod of iron." The rod of iron is the sword of persecution.

"I saw that all men withdrew from his abodes." That is, the good will be removed, flying from persecution. "And her son was caught up to God, and to His throne." We read also in the Acts of the Apostles that He was caught up to God's throne, just as speaking with the disciples He was caught up to heaven. 6. "But the woman fled into the wilderness, and there were given to her two great eagle's wings." The aid of the great eagle's wings-to wit, the gift of prophets-was given to that Catholic Church, whence in the last times a hundred and forty-four thousands of men should believe on the preaching of Elias; but, moreover, he here says that the rest of the people should be found alive on the coming of the Lord. And the Lord says in the Gospel:

"Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; " that is, as many as should be gathered together in Judea, let them go to that place which they have ready, and let them be supported there for three years and six months from the presence of the devil.

14. "Two great wings" are the two prophets-Elias, and the prophet who shall be with him. 15. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a flood, that he might carry her away with the flood." He signifies by the water which the serpent cast out of his mouth, the people who at his command would persecute her. 16. "And the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." That the earth opened her month and swallowed up the waters, sets forth the vengeance for the present troubles. Although, therefore, it may signify this woman bringing forth, it shows her afterwards flying when her offspring is brought forth, because both things did not happen at one time; for we know that Christ was born, but that the time should arrive that she should flee from the face of the serpent: (we do not know) that this has happened as yet. Then he says:-

7-9. "There was a battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not; nor was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast forth, that old serpent: he was cast forth into the earth." This is the beginning of Antichrist yet previously Elias must prophesy, and there must be times of peace. And afterwards, when the three years and six months are completed in the preaching of Elias, he also must be cast down from heaven, where up till that time he had had the power of ascending; and all the apostate angels, as well as Antichrist, must be roused up from hell. Paul the apostle says: "Except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin shall appear, the son of perdition; and the adversary who exalted himself above all which is called God, or which is worshipped."

From the Thirteenth Chapter.

1. "And I saw a beast rising up from the sea, like unto a leopard." This signifies the kingdom of that time of Antichrist, and the people mingled with the variety of nations. 2. "His feet were as the feet of a bear." A strong and most unclean beast, the feet are to be understood as his leaders. "And his mouth as the mouth of a lion." That is, his mouth armed for blood is his bidding, and a tongue which will proceed to nothing else than to the shed-

ding of blood. 18. "His number is the name of a man, and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." As they have it reckoned from the Greek characters, they thus find it among many to be teitan, for teitan has this number, which the Gentiles call Sol and Phoebus; and it is reckoned in Greek thus: t three hundred, e five, i ten, t three hundred, a one, n fifty,-which taken together become six hundred and sixty-six. For as far as belongs to the Greek letters, they fill up this number and name; which name if you wish to turn into Latin, it is understood by the antiphrase Diclux, which letters are reckoned in this manner: since D figures five hundred, I one, C a hundred, L fifty, V five, X ten,-which by the reckoning up of the letters makes similarly six hundred and sixty-six, that is, what in Greek gives teitan, to wit, what in Latin is called Diclux; by which name, expressed by anti-phrases, we understand Antichrist, who, although he be cut off from the supernal light, and deprived thereof, yet transforms himself into an angel of light, daring to call himself light. Moreover, we find in a certain Greek codex antemoj, which letters being reckoned up, you will find to give the number as above: a one, n fifty, t three hundred, e five, m forty, o seventy, j two hundred,-which together makes six hundred and sixty-six, according to the Greeks. Moreover, there is another name in Gothic of him, which will be evident of itself, that is, genshrikoj, which in the same way you will reckon in Greek letters: g three, e five, n fifty, j two hundred, h eight, r a hundred, i ten, k twenty, o seventy, j also two hundred, which, as has been said above, make six hundred and sixty-six.

11. "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth." He is speaking of the great and false prophet who is to do signs, and portents, and falsehoods before him in the presence of men. "And he had two horns like a lamb-that is, the appearance within of a man-and he spoke like a dragon." But the devil speaks full of malice; for he shall do these things in the presence of men, so that even the dead appear to rise again. 13. "And he shall make fire come down from heaven in the sight of men." Yes (as I also have said), in the sight of men. Magicians do these things, by the aid of the apostate angels, even to this day. He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles. Moreover, he himself shall contrive that his servants and children should receive as a mark on their foreheads, or on their right hands, the number of his name, lest any one should

buy or sell them. Daniel had previously predicted his contempt and provocation of God. "And he shall place," says he, "his temple within Samaria, upon the illustrious and holy mountain that is at Jerusalem, an image such as Nebuchadnezzar had made." Thence here he places, and by and by here he renews, that of which the Lord, admonishing His churches concerning the last times and their dangers, says: "But when ye shall see the contempt which is spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place, let him who readeth understand." It is called a contempt when God is provoked, because idols are worshipped instead of God, or when the dogma of heretics is introduced in the churches. But it is a turning away because steadfast men, seduced by false signs and portents, are turned away from their salvation.

From the Fourteenth Chapter.

6. "And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven." The angel flying through the midst of heaven, whom he says that he saw, we have already treated of above, as being the same Elias who anticipates the kingdom of Anti-christ in his prophecy. 8. "And another angel following him." The other angel following, he speaks of as the same prophet who is the associate of his prophesying. But that he says, - 15. "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather in the grapes of the vine," he signifies it of the nations that should perish on the advent of the Lord. And indeed in many forms he shows this same thing, as if to the dry harvest, and the seed for the coming of the Lord, and the consummation of the world, and the kingdom of Christ, and the future appearance of the kingdom of the blessed. 19, 20. "And the angel thrust in the sickle, and reaped the vine of the earth, and cast it into the wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press of His fury was trodden down without the city." In that he says that it was cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, and trodden down without the city, the treading of the wine-press is the retribution on the sinner.

"And blood went out from the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles." The vengeance of shed blood as was before predicted, "In blood thou hast sinned, and blood shall follow thee." "For a thousand and six hundred furlongs." That is, through all the four parts of the world: for there is a quadrate put together by fours, as in four faces and four appearances, and wheels by fours; for forty times four is one thousand six hundred. Repeating the same persecution, the Apocalypse says:-

From the Fifteenth Chapter.

1. "And I saw another great and wonderful sign, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is completed the indignation of God." For the wrath of God always strikes the obstinate people with seven plagues, that is, perfectly, as it is said in Leviticus; and these shall be in the last time, when the Church shall have gone out of the midst. 2. "Standing upon the sea of glass, having harps." That is, that they stood stedfastly in the faith upon their baptism, and having their confession in their mouth, that they shall exult in the kingdom before God. But let us return to what is set before us.

From the Seventeenth Chapter.

1-6. "There came one of the seven angels, which have the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come, I will show thee the judgment of that great whore who sitteth upon many waters. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs." The decrees of that senate are always accomplished against all, contrary to the preaching of the true faith; and now already mercy being cast aside, itself here gave the decree among all nations. 3. "And I saw the woman herself sitting upon the scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy." But to sit upon the scarlet beast, the author of murders, is the image of the devil. Where also is treated of his captivity, concerning which we have fully considered. I remember, indeed, that this is called Babylon also in the Apocalypse, on account of confusion; and in Isaiah also; and Ezekiel called it Sodom. In fine, if you compare what is said against Sodom, and what Isaiah says against Babylon, and what the Apocalypse says, you will find that they are all one.

9. "The seven heads are the seven hills, on which the woman sitteth." That is, the city of Rome. 10. "And there are seven kings: five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he is come, he will be for a short time." The time must be understood in which the written Apocalypse was published, since then reigned Caesar Domitian; but before him had been Titus his brother, and Vespasian, Otho, Vitellius, and Galba. These are the five who have fallen. One remains, under whom the Apocalypse was written—Domitian, to wit. "The other has not yet come," speaks of Nerva; "and when he is come, he will be for a short time," for he did not complete the period of two years. 11. "And the beast which thou sawest is of the seven." Since before those kings Nero reigned. "And he is the eighth." He says only when this

beast shall come, reckon it the eighth place, since in that is the completion. He added:-

"And shall go into perdition." For that ten kings received royal power when he shall move from the east, he says. He shall be sent from the city of Rome with his armies. And Daniel sets forth the ten horns and the ten diadems. And that these are eradicated from the former ones,-that is, that three of the principal leaders are killed by Antichrist: that the other seven give him honour and wisdom and power, of whom he says:- 16. "These shall hate the whore, to wit, the city, and shall burn her flesh with fire." Now that one of the heads was, as it were, slain to death, and that the stroke of his death was directed, he speaks of Nero. For it is plain that when the cavalry sent by the senate was pursuing him, he himself cut his throat. Him therefore, when raised up, God will send as a worthy king, but worthy in such a way as the Jews merited. And since he is to have another name, He shall also appoint another name, that so the Jews may receive him as if he were the Christ. Says Daniel: "He shall not know the lust of women, although before he was most impure, and he shall know no God of his fathers: for he will not be able to seduce the people of the circumcision, unless he is a judge of the law." Finally, also, he will recall the saints, not to the worship of idols, but to undertake circumcision, and, if he is able, to seduce any; for he shall so conduct himself as to be called Christ by them. But that he rises again from hell, we have said above in the word of Isaiah: "Water shall nourish him, and hell hath increased him; "who, however, must come with name unchanged, and doings unchanged, as says the Spirit.

From the Nineteenth Chapter.

11. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sate upon him was called Faithful and True." The horse, and He that sits upon him, sets forth our Lord coming to His kingdom with the heavenly army. Because from the sea of the north, which is the Arabian Sea, even to the sea of Phoenice, and even to the ends of the earth, they will command these greater parts in the coming of the Lord Jesus, and all the souls of the nations will be assembled to judgment.

From the Twentieth Chapter.

1-3. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a chain in his hand. And he held the dragon, that old serpent,

which is called the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed a little season. Those years wherein Satan is bound are in the first advent of Christ, even to the end of the age; and they are called a thousand, according to that mode of speaking, wherein a part is signified by the whole, just as is that passage, "the word which He commanded for a thousand generations," although they are not a thousand. Moreover that he says, "and he cast him into the abyss," he says this, because the devil, excluded from the hearts of believers, began to take possession of the wicked, in whose hearts, blinded day by day, he is shut up as if in a profound abyss. And he shut him up, says he, and put a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations until the thousand years should be finished. "He shut the door upon him," it is said, that is, he forbade and restrained his seducing those who belong to Christ.

Moreover, he put a seal upon him, because it is hidden who belong to the side of the devil, and who to that of Christ. For we know not of those who seem to stand whether they shall not fall, and of those who are down it is uncertain whether they may rise. Moreover, that he says that he is bound and shut up, that he may not seduce the nations, the nations signify the Church, seeing that of them it itself is formed, and which being seduced, he previously held until, he says, the thousand years should be completed, that is, what is left of the sixth day, to wit, of the sixth age, which subsists for a thousand years; after this he must be loosed for a little season. The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself trader Antichrist against the Church. Finally, he says, after that the devil shall be loosed, and will seduce the nations in the whole world, and will entice war against the Church, the number of whose foes shall be as the sand of the sea.

4, 5. "And I saw thrones, and them that sate upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were slain on account of the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his writing on their forehead or in their hand; and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years: the rest of them lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." There are two resurrections. But the first resurrection

is now of the souls that are by the faith, which does not permit men to pass over to the second death. Of this resurrection the apostle says: "If ye have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." 6. "Blessed and holy is he who has part in this resurrection: on them the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and they shall reign with Him a thousand years." I do not think the reign of a thousand years is eternal; or if it is thus to be thought of, they cease to reign when the thousand years are finished. But I will put forward what my capacity enables me to judge. The tenfold number signifies the decalogue, and the hundredfold sets forth the crown of virginity: for he who shall have kept the undertaking of virginity completely, and shall have faithfully fulfilled the precepts of the decalogue, and shall have destroyed the untrained nature or impure thoughts within the retirement of the heart, that they may not rule over him, this is the true priest of Christ, and accomplishing the millenary number thoroughly, is thought to reign with Christ; and truly in his case the devil is bound. But he who is entangled in the vices and the dogmas of heretics, in his case the devil is loosed. But that it says that when the thousand years are finished he is loosed, so the number of the perfect saints being completed, in whom there is the glory of virginity in body and mind, by the approaching advent of the kingdom of the hateful one, many, seduced by that love of earthly things, shall be overthrown, and together with him shall enter the lake of fire.

8-10. "And they went up upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the take of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." [This belongs to the last judgment. And after a little time the earth was made holy, as being at least that wherein lately had reposed the bodies of the virgins, when they shall enter upon an eternal kingdom with an immortal King, as they who are not only virgins in body, but, moreover, with equal inviolability have protected themselves, both in tongue and thought, from wickedness; and these, it shows, shall dwell in rejoicing for ever with the Lamb.

From the Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Chapters.

16. "And the city is placed in a square. The city which he says is squared, he says also is resplendent with gold and precious stones, and has a sacred street,

and a river through the midst of it, and the tree of life on either side, bearing twelve manner of fruits throughout the twelve months; and that the light of the sun is not there, because the Lamb is the light of it; and that its gates were of single pearls; and that there were three gates on each of the four sides, and that they could not be shut. I say, in respect of the square city, he shows forth the united multitude of the saints, in whom the faith could by no means waver. As Noah is commanded to make the ark of squared beams, that it might resist the force of the deluge, by the precious stones he sets forth the holy men who cannot waver in persecution, who could not be moved either by the tempest of persecutors, or be dissolved from the true faith by the force of the rain, because they are associated of pure gold, of whom the city of the great King is adorned. Moreover, the streets set forth their hearts purified from all uncleanness, transparent with glowing light, that the Lord may justly walk up and down in them. The river of life sets forth that the grace of spiritual doctrine flowed through the minds of the faithful, and that manifold flourishing forms of odours germinated therein.

The tree of life on either bank sets forth the Advent of Christ, according to the flesh, who satisfied the peoples wasted with famine, that received life from One by the wood of the Cross, with the announcement of God's word. And in that he says that the sun is not necessary in the city, he shows, evidently, that the Creator as the immaculate light shines in the midst of it, whose brightness no mind has been able to conceive, nor tongue to tell. In that he says there are three gates placed on each of the four sides, of single pearls, I think that these are the four virtues, to wit, prudence, fortitude, justice, temperance, which are associated with one another. And, being involved together, they make the number twelve. But the twelve gates we believe to be the number of the apostles, who, shining in the four virtues as precious stones, manifesting the light of their doctrine among the saints, cause it to enter the celestial city, that by intercourse with them the choir of angels may be gladdened. And that the gates cannot be shut, it is evidently shown that the doctrine of the apostles can be separated from rectitude by no tempest of contradiction. Even though the floods of the nations and the vain superstitions of heretics should revolt against their true faith, they are overcome, and shall be dissolved as the foam, because Christ is the Rock by which, and on which, the Church is founded. And thus it is overcome by no traces of maddened men. Therefore they are not to be heard who assure

themselves that there is to be an earthly reign of a thousand years; who think, that is to say, with the heretic Cerinthus. For the kingdom of Christ is now eternal in the saints, although the glory of the saints shall be manifested after the resurrection.

On the Creation of the World

VICTORINUS OF PETTAU

d. c. AD 304

Bishop and martyr; earliest Latin commentator on Revelation.

ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

¹ To me, as I meditate and consider in my mind concerning the creation of this world in which we are kept enclosed, even such is the rapidity of that creation; as is contained in the book of Moses, which he wrote about its creation, and which is called Genesis. God produced that entire mass for the adornment of His majesty in six days; on the seventh to which He consecrated it ...with a blessing. For this reason, therefore, because in the septenary number of days both heavenly and earthly things are ordered, in place of the beginning I will consider of this seventh day after the principle of all matters pertaining to the number of seven; and as far as I shall be able, I will endeavour to portray the day of the divine power to that consummation. In the beginning God made the light, and divided it in the exact measure of twelve hours by day and by night, for this reason, doubtless, that day might bring over the night as an occasion of rest for men's labours; that, again, day might overcome, and thus that labour might be refreshed with this alternate change of rest, and that repose again might be tempered by the exercise of day. "On the fourth day He made two lights in the heaven, the greater and the lesser, that the one might rule over the day, the other over the night," - the lights of the sun and moon and He placed the rest of the stars in heaven, that they might shine upon the earth, and by their positions distinguish the seasons, and years, and months, and days, and hours.

² Now is manifested the reason of the truth why the fourth day is called the Tetras, why we fast even to the ninth hour, or even to the evening, or why there should be a passing over even to the next day. Therefore this world of ours is composed of four elements-fire, water, heaven, earth. These four

elements, therefore, form the quaternion of times or seasons. The sun, also, and the moon constitute throughout the space of the year four seasons-of spring, summer, autumn, winter; and these seasons make a quaternion. And to proceed further still from that principle, lo, there are four living creatures before God's throne, four Gospels, four rivers flowing in paradise; four generations of people from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ the Lord, the Son of God; and four living creatures, viz., a man, a calf, a lion, an eagle; and four rivers, the Pison, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. The man Christ Jesus, the originator of these things whereof we have above spoken, was taken prisoner by wicked hands, by a quaternion of soldiers. Therefore on account of His captivity by a quaternion, on account of the majesty of His works,-that the seasons also, wholesome to humanity, joyful for the harvests, tranquil for the tempests, may roll on,-therefore we make the fourth day a station or a super-numerary fast.

3 On the fifth day the land and water brought forth their progenies. On the sixth day the things that were wanting were created; and thus God raised up man from the soil, as lord of all the things which He created upon the earth and the water. Yet He created angels and archangels before He created man, placing spiritual beings before earthly ones. For light was made before sky and the earth. This sixth day is called *parasceve*, that is to say, the preparation of the kingdom. For He perfected Adam, whom He made after His image and likeness. But for this reason He completed His works before He created angels and fashioned man, lest perchance they should falsely assert that they had been His helpers. On this day also, on account of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we make either a station to God, or a fast. On the seventh day He rested from all His works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the *parasceve* become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that "His soul hateth; " which Sabbath He in His body abolished, although, nevertheless, He had formerly Himself commanded Moses that circumcision should not pass over the eighth day, which day very frequently happens on the Sabbath, as we read written in the Gospel. Moses, foreseeing the hardness of that people, on the Sabbath raised up his hands, therefore, and thus figur-

actively fastened himself to a cross. And in the battle they were sought for by the foreigners on the Sabbath-day, that they might be taken captive, and, as if by the very strictness of the law, might be fashioned to the avoidance of its teaching.

⁴ And thus in the sixth Psalm for the eighth day, David asks the Lord that He would not rebuke him in His anger, nor judge him in His fury; for this is indeed the eighth day of that future judgment, which will pass beyond the order of the sevenfold arrangement. Jesus also, the son of Nave, the successor of Moses, himSelf broke the Sabbath-day; for on the Sabbath-day he commanded the children of Israel to go round the walls of the city of Jericho with trumpets, and declare war against the aliens. Matthias also, prince of Judah, broke the Sabbath; for he slew the prefect of Antiochus the king of Syria on the Sabbath, and subdued the foreigners by pursuing them. And in Matthew we read, that it is written Isaiah also and the rest of his colleagues broke the Sabbath -that that true and just Sabbath should be observed in the seventh millenary of years. Wherefore to those seven days the Lord attributed to each a thousand years; for thus went the warning: "In Thine eyes, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day. Therefore in the eyes of the Lord each thousand of years is ordained, for I find that the Lord's eyes are seven. Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign. Moreover, the seven heavens agree with those days; for thus we are warned:

⁵ "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the powers of them by the spirit of His mouth. There are seven spirits. Their names are the spirits which abode on the Christ of God, as was intimated in Isaiah the prophet: "And there rests upon Him the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of wisdom and of piety, and the spirit of God's fear hath filled Him. Therefore the highest heaven is the heaven of wisdom; the second, of understanding; the third, of counsel; the fourth, of might; the fifth, of knowledge; the sixth, of piety; the seventh, of God's fear. From this, therefore, the thunders bellow, the lightnings are kindled, the fires are heaped together; fiery darts appear, stars gleam, the anxiety caused by the dreadful comet is aroused. Sometimes it happens that the sun and moon approach one another, and cause those more than frightful appearances, radiating with light in the field of their aspect. But the author of the whole creation is Jesus. His name is the Word; for thus His Father

says: "My heart hath emitted a good word. John the evangelist thus says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made. Therefore, first, was made the creation; secondly, man, the lord of the human race, as says the apostle.

6 Therefore this Word, when it made light, is called Wisdom; when it made the sky, Understanding; when it made land and sea, Counsel; when it made sun and moon and other bright things, Power; when it calls forth land and sea, Knowledge; when it formed man, Piety; when it blesses and sanctifies man, it has the name of God's fear. 7 Behold the seven horns of the Lamb, the seven eyes of God -the seven eyes are the seven spirits of the Lamb; seven torches burning before the throne of God seven golden candlesticks, seven young sheep, the seven women in Isaiah, the seven churches in Paul, seven deacons, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven seals to the book, seven periods of seven days with which Pentecost is completed, the seven weeks in Daniel, also the forty-three weeks in Daniel; with Noah, seven of all clean things in the ark; seven revenges of Cain, seven years for a debt to be acquitted, the lamp with seven orifices, seven pillars of wisdom in the house of Solomon.

8 Now, therefore, you may see that it is being told you of the unerring glory of God in providence; yet, as far as my small capacity shall be able, I will endeavour to set it forth. That He might re-create that Adam by means of the week, and bring aid to His entire creation, was accomplished by the nativity of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Who, then, that is taught in the law of God, who that is filled with the Holy Spirit, does not see in his heart, that on the same day on which the dragon seduced Eve, the angel Gabriel brought the glad tidings to the Virgin Mary; that on the same day the Holy Spirit overflowed the Virgin Mary, on which He made light; that on that day He was incarnate in flesh, in which He made the land and water; that on the same day He was put to the breast, on which He made the stars; that on the same day He was circumcised, on which the land and water brought forth their offspring; that on the same day He was incarnated, on which He formed man out of the ground; that on the same day Christ was born, on which He formed man; that on that day He suffered, on which Adam fell;

that on the same day He rose again from the dead, on which He created light? He, moreover, consummates His humanity in the number seven:

9 of His nativity, His infancy, His boyhood, His youth, His young-manhood, His mature age, His death. I have also set forth His humanity to the Jews in these manners: since He is hungry, is thirsty; since He gave food and drink; since He walks, and retired; since He slept upon a pillow; since, moreover, He walks upon the stormy seas with His feet, He commands the winds, He cures the sick and restores the lame, He raises the blind by His speech, -see ye that He declares Himself to them to be the Lord. 10 The day, as I have above related, is divided into two parts by the number twelve-by the twelve hours of day and night; and by these hours too, months, and years, and seasons, and ages are computed. Therefore, doubtless, there are appointed also twelve angels of the day and twelve angels of the night, in accordance, to wit, with the number of hours. For these are the twenty-four witnesses of the days and nights which sit before the throne of God, having golden crowns on their heads, whom the Apocalypse of John the apostle and evangelist calls elders, for the reason that they are older both than the other angels and than men.

An Exposition of the Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles

PAMPHILUS OF CAESAREA

d. AD 309

Scholar and martyr, teacher of Eusebius.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

¹Having had ourselves the advantage of the method and model received from our fathers and teachers, we attempt, in a modest way, to give these in this exposition of the chapters, entreating your forgiveness for the rashness of such an endeavour in us who are young in point both of years and of study, and looking to have the indulgence of every one who reads this writing in prayer on our behalf. We make this exposition, therefore, after the history of Luke, the evangelist and historian. And, accordingly, we have indicated whole chapters by the letters of the alphabet, and their subdivisions into parts we have noted by means of the asterisk. a. Of Christ's teaching after His resurrection, and of His appearing to the disciples, and of the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of the spectacle and manner of Christ's assumption. b. Peter's discourse to those who were made disciples, on the subject of the death and reprobation of Judas; * in this chapter we have also the section on the substitution of Matthias, who was elected by lot through the grace of God with prayer.

2 c. Of the divine descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost which lighted on them who believed. In this we have also the instruction delivered by Peter, and * passages from the prophets on the subject, and * on the passion and resurrection and assumption of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; also * of the faith of those present, and their salvation by baptism; and, further, * of the unity of spirit pervading the believers and promoting the common good, and of the addition made to their number. d. Of the healing in (the name of) Christ of the man lame from his birth; and of

the discourse of Peter, in which he reasons and sympathizes and counsels with respect to his salvation. And here we have * the interposition of the chief priests through jealousy of what had taken place, and their judgment on the miracle, and Peter's confession of the power and grace of Christ. Also the section on* the unbelieving chief priests, commanding that they should not speak boldly in the name of Christ, and of the dismissal of the apostles. Then * the thanksgivings offered up by the Church for the faithful constancy of the apostles.

3e. Of the harmonious and universal fellowship of the believers; and also*of Ananias and Sapphira and their miserable end. f. Of the apostles being cast into prison, and led out of it by night by the angel of the Lord, who enjoined them to preach Jesus without restraint; and * of the fact that, on the following day, the chief priests apprehended them again, and, after scourging them, sent them away with the charge not to teach any longer. Then * the trusty opinion of Gamaliel touching the apostles, together with certain examples and proofs. G. Of the election of the seven deacons. h. The rising and slanderous information of the Jews against Stephen, and his address concerning the covenant of God with Abraham, and concerning the twelve patriarchs. Also the account of the famine and the buying of corn, and the mutual recognition of the sons of Jacob, and of the birth of Moses and the appearance of God to Moses, which took place at Mount Sinai. * Also of the exodus and and calf-making of Israel (and other matters), up to the times of Solomon and the building of the temple. * Then the acknowledgment of the supercelestial glory of Jesus Christ which was revealed to Stephen himself, on account of which Stephen was himself stoned, and fell asleep piously.

4i. Of the persecution of the Church and the burial of Stephen; also * of the healing of many in Samaria by Philip the apostle. j. Of Simon Magus, who believed and was baptized with many others; also* of the sending of Peter and John to them, and their praying for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the baptized. k. That the participation of the Holy Ghost was not given for money, nor to hypocrites, but to saints by faith; also* of the hypocrisy and the reproof of Simon. l. That the Lord helps the good and the believing on the way to salvation, as is shown from the instance of the eunuch. m. Of the divine call that came from heaven for Paul to the apostleship of Christ; also* of the healing and the baptism of Paul by the hand of Ananias, in ac-

cordance with the revelation from God, and of his boldness of speech and his association with the apostles by the instrumentality of Barnabas.

5 n. Of the paralytic Aeneas who was cured by Peter at Lydda. Also* the account of Tabitha, the friend of widows, whom Peter raised from the dead by means of prayer in Joppa. o. Of Cornelius, and what the angel said to him. Also what was spoken to Peter from heaven with respect to the calling of the Gentiles. Then* that Peter, on being summoned, came to Cornelius. *The repetition by Cornelius of the things which the angel hid to Cornelius himself. *Peter's instruction of them in Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost upon those who heard him, and how those who believed from among the Gentiles were baptized there. p. That Peter recounts to the apostles who contended with him all the things that had happened in order and separately. Then the sending of Barnabas to the brethren in Antioch. q. The prophecy of Agabus respecting the famine in the world, and the liberal relief sent to the brethren in Jerusalem.

6 r. The slaying of the Apostle James. *Also the apprehension of Peter by Herod, and the account of the manner in which the angel by divine command delivered him from his bonds, and how Peter, after showing himself to the disciples by night, quietly withdrew. Also of the punishment of the keepers, and then of themiserable and fatal overthrow of the impious Herod. s. The sending of Barnabas and Paul by the Holy Ghost to Cyprus.*The things which he did there in the name of Christ on Elymas the sorcerer. t. Paul's admirable exposition of the truth concerning Christ, both from the law and from the prophets in their order, both historical and evangelical; * his use both of the confuting and the argumentative mode of discourse on the subject of the transference of the word of preaching to the Gentiles, and of their persecution and their arrival at Iconium.

7 u. How, when they had preached Christ in Iconium, and many had believed, the apostles were persecuted. v. Of the man lame from his birth in Lystra who was healed by the apostles; on account of which they were taken by the people of the place for gods who had appeared on earth. After that, however, Paul is stoned there by the neighbouring people. w. That according to the decree and judgment of the apostles, the Gentiles who believe ought not to be circumcised. Here, also, is the epistle of the apostles themselves to those from among the Gentiles, on the subject of the things from which they should keep themselves. * The dissension of Paul with Barnabas on ac-

count of Mark. x. Of the teaching of Timothy, and of the coming of Paul into Macedonia according to revelation. *Of the faith and salvation of a certain woman Lydia, and* of the cure of the damsel having a spirit of divination, on account of which the masters of the damsel cast Paul into prison; and* of the earthquake and miracle which happened there; and how the jailer believed and was baptized forthwith that same night with all his house. * That the apostles on being besought went out from the prison.

8 y. Of the tumult that arose in Thessalonica on account of their preaching, and of the flight of Paul to Berea, and thence to Athens. z. Of the inscription on the altar at Athens, and of the philosophic preaching and piety of Paul. aa. Of Aquila and Priscilla, and, the unbelief of the Corinthians, and of the good-will of God towards them according to fore-knowledge revealed to Paul. Also* of Priscus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, who believed with certain others and was baptized. And* that a tumult being stirred up in Corinth, Paul departed; and coming to Ephesus, and having discoursed there, he left it.*And concerning Apollos, an eloquent man and a believer.] bb. Of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred by means of the prayer of Paul on those who believed in Ephesus, and of the healing of the people. *Of the sons of Sceva, and as to its not being meet to approach those who have become unbelieving and unworthy of the faith; and of the confession of those who believed; * and of the tumult that was stirred up in Ephesus by Demetrius, the silversmith, against the apostles.

9 cc. Of the circuit of Paul, in which also we have the account of the death of Eutychus and his restoration by prayer in Troas; also Paul's own pastoral exhortations to the presbyters at Ephesus; also Paul's voyage from Ephesus to Caesareia in Palestine. dd. The prophecy of Agabus as to what should befall Paul in Jerusalem. ee. The address of James to Paul touching the matter that he should not offer to keep the Hebrews back from the practice of circumcision. ff. Of the tumult that was excited against Paul in Jerusalem, and how the chief-captain rescues him from the mob. *Also Paul's speech concerning himself and his vocation to be an apostle; * and of what Ananias said to Paul in Damascus, and of the vision and the voice of God that befell him once in the temple. *And that when Paul was about to be beaten for these words, on declaring that he was a Roman, he was let go.

10 gg. What Paul endured, and what he said, and what he did exactly when he came down into the council. hh. Of the ambush planned by the

Jews against Paul, and its discovery to Lysias; * and that Paul was sent to Caesareia to the governor with soldiers and with a letter. ii. Of the accusation laid by Tertullus in Paul's case, and of his defence of himself before the governor. jj. . Of the removal of Felix and the arrival of Festus as his successor, and of Paul's pleading before them, and his dismissal. kk. The coming of Agrippa and Bernice, and their inquiry into the case of Paul. * Paul's defence of himself before Agrippa and Bernice, respecting his nurture in the law, and his vocation to the Gospel. That Paul does no wrong to the Jews, Agrippa said to Festus. ll. Paul's voyage to Rome, abounding in very many and very great perils. *Paul's exhortation to those with him as to his hope of deliverance. The shipwreck of Paul, and how they effected their safety on the island of Melita, and what marvellous things he did on it.

11 mm. How Paul reached Rome from Melita. nn. Of Paul's discourse with the Jews in Rome. There are in all forty chapters; and the sections following these, and marked with the asterisk, are forty-eight.

The Banquet, Discourse 1: Marcella

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.—THE DIFFICULTY AND EXCELLENCE OF VIRGINITY; THE STUDY OF DOCTRINE NECESSARY FOR VIRGINS.

¹ Virginité is something supernaturally great, wonderful, and glorious; and, to speak plainly and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, this best and noblest manner of life alone is the root of immortality, and also its flower and first-fruits; and for this reason the Lord promises that those shall enter into the kingdom of heaven who have made themselves eunuchs, in that passage of the Gospels in which He lays down the various reasons for which men have made themselves eunuchs. Chastity with men is a very rare thing, and difficult of attainment, and in proportion to its supreme excellence and magnificence is the greatness of its dangers. For this reason, it requires strong and generous natures, such as, vaulting over the stream of pleasure, direct the chariot of the soul upwards from the earth, not turning aside from their aim, until having, by swiftness of thought, lightly bounded above the world, and taken their stand truly upon the vault of heaven, they purely contemplate immortality itself as it springs forth from the undefiled bosom of the Almighty.

² Earth could not bring forth this draught; heaven alone knew the fountain from whence it flows; for we must think of virginity as walking indeed upon the earth, but as also reaching up to heaven. And hence some who have longed for it, and considering only the end of it, have come, by reason of coarseness of mind, ineffectually with unwashed feet, and have gone aside out of the way, from having conceived no worthy idea of the virginal manner of life. For it is not enough to keep the body only undefiled, just as we should not show that we think more of the temple than of the image of the god; but we should care for the souls of men as being the divinities of their

bodies, and adorn them with righteousness. And then do they most care for them and tend them when, striving untiringly to hear divine discourses, they do not desist until, wearing the doors of the wise, they attain to the knowledge of the truth.

³For as the putrid humours and matter of flesh, and all those things which corrupt it, are driven out by salt, in the same manner all the irrational appetites of a virgin are banished from the body by divine teaching. For it must needs be that the soul which is not sprinkled with the words of Christ, as with salt, should stink and breed worms, as King David, openly confessing with tears in the mountains, cried out, "My wounds stink and are corrupt," because he had not salted himself with the exercises of self-control, and so subdued his carnal appetites, but self-indulgently had yielded to them, and became corrupted in adultery. And hence, in Leviticus, every gift, unless it be seasoned with salt, is forbidden to be offered as an oblation to the Lord God. Now the whole spiritual meditation of the Scriptures is given to us as salt which stings in order to benefit, and which disinfects, without which it is impossible for a soul, by means of reason, to be brought to the Almighty; for "ye are the salt of the earth," said the Lord to the apostles. It is fitting, then, that a virgin should always love things which are honourable, and be distinguished among the foremost for wisdom and addicted to nothing slothful or luxurious, but should excel, and set her mind upon things worthy of the state of virginity, always putting away, by the word, the foulness of luxury, lest in any way some slight hidden corruption should breed the worm of incontinence;

⁴for "the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord," how she may please the Lord, "that she may be holy both in body and in spirit," says the blessed Paul. But many of them who consider the hearing of the word quite a secondary matter, think they do great things if they give their attention to it for a little while. But discrimination must be exercised with respect to these; for it is not fitting to impart divine instruction to a nature which is careful about trifles, and low, and which counterfeits wisdom. For would it not be laughable to go on talking to those who direct all their energy towards things of little value, in order that they may complete most accurately those things which they want to bring to perfection, but do not think that the greatest pains are to be taken with those necessary things by which most of all the love of chastity would be increased in them?

CHAPTER II.-VIRGINITY A PLANT FROM HEAVEN, INTRODUCED LATE;
THE ADVANCEMENT OF MANKIND TO PERFECTION, HOW ARRANGED.

¹For truly by a great stretch of power the plant of virginity was sent down to men from heaven, and for this reason it was not revealed to the first generations. For the race of mankind was still very small in number; and it was necessary that it should first be increased in number, and then brought to perfection. Therefore the men of old times thought it nothing unseemly to take their own sisters for wives, until the law coming separated them, and by forbidding that which at first had seemed to be right, declared it to be a sin, calling him cursed who should "uncover the nakedness" of his sister; God thus mercifully bringing to our race the needful help in due season, as parents do to their children. For they do not at once set masters over them, but allow them, during the period of childhood, to amuse themselves like young animals, and first send them to teachers stammering like themselves, until they cast off the youthful wool of the mind, and go onwards to the practice of greater things, and from thence again to that of greater still. And thus we must consider that the God and Father of all acted towards our forefathers. For the world, while still unfilled with men, was like a child, and it was necessary that it should first be filled with these, and so grow to manhood.

²But when hereafter it was colonized from end to end, the race of man spreading to a boundless extent, God no longer allowed man to remain in the same ways, considering how they might now proceed from one point to another, and advance nearer to heaven, until, having attained to the very greatest and most exalted lesson of virginity, they should reach to perfection; that first they should abandon the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, and marry wives from other families; and then that they should no longer have many wives, like brute beasts, as though born for the mere propagation of the species; and then that they should not be adulterers; and then again that they should go on to continence, and from continence to virginity, when, having trained themselves to despise the flesh, they sail fearlessly into the peaceful haven of immortality.

CHAPTER III.-BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF ABRAHAM, MARRIAGE WITH
SISTERS FORBIDDEN; IN THE TIMES OF THE PROPHETS POLYGAMY PUT
A STOP TO; CONJUGAL PURITY ITSELF BY DEGREES ENFORCED.

¹If, however, any one should venture to find fault with our argument as destitute of Scripture proof, we will bring forward the writings of the prophets,

and more fully demonstrate the truth of the statements already made. Now Abraham, when he first received the covenant of circumcision, seems to signify, by receiving circumcision in a member of his own body, nothing else than this, that one should no longer beget children with one born of the same parent; showing that every one should abstain from intercourse with his own sister, as his own flesh. And thus, from the time of Abraham, the custom of marrying with sisters has ceased; and from the times of the prophets the contracting of marriage with several wives has been done away with; for we read, "Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites;" for "wine and women will make men of understanding to fall away;" and in another place, "Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth," manifestly forbidding a plurality of wives. And Jeremiah clearly gives the name of "fed horses" to those who lust after other women; and we read, "The multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive, nor take deep rooting from bastard slips, nor lay any fast foundation."

² Lest, however, we should seem prolix in collecting the testimonies of the prophets, let us again point out how chastity succeeded to marriage with one wife, taking away by degrees the lusts of the flesh, until it removed entirely the inclination for sexual intercourse engendered by habit. For presently one is introduced earnestly deprecating, from henceforth, this seduction, saying, "O Lord, Father, and Governor of my life, leave me not to their counsels; give me not a proud look; let not the greediness of the belly, nor lust of the flesh, take hold of me." And in the Book of Wisdom, a book full of all virtue, the Holy Spirit, now openly drawing His hearers to continence and chastity, sings on this wise, "Better it is to have no children, and to have virtue, for the memorial thereof is immortal; because it is known with God and with men. When it is present men take example at it; and when it is gone they desire it: it weareth a crown and triumpheth for ever, having gotten the victory, striving for undefiled rewards."

CHAPTER IV.-CHRIST ALONE TAUGHT VIRGINITY, OPENLY PREACHING
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; THE LIKENESS OF GOD TO BE ATTAINED IN
THE LIGHT OF THE DIVINE VIRTUES.

¹ We have already spoken of the periods of the human race, and how, beginning with the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, it went on to continence; and we have now left for us the subject of virginity. Let us then endeavour to speak of this as well as we can. And first let us inquire for what reason

it was that no one of the many patriarchs and prophets and righteous men, who taught and did many noble things, either praised or chose the state of virginity. Because it was reserved for the Lord alone to be the first to teach this doctrine, since He alone, coming down to us, taught man to draw near to God; for it was fitting that He who was first and chief of priests, of prophets, and of angels, should also be saluted as first and chief of virgins. For in old times man was not yet perfect, and for this reason was unable to receive perfection, which is virginity. For, being made in the Image of God, he needed to receive that which was according to His Likeness; which the Word being sent down into the world to perfect. He first took upon Him our form, disfigured as it was by many sins, in order that we, for whose sake He bore it, might be able again to receive the divine form.

²For it is then that we are truly fashioned in the likeness of God, when we represent His features in a human life, like skilful painters, stamping them upon ourselves as upon tablets, learning the path which He showed us. And for this reason He, being God, was pleased to put on human flesh, so that we, beholding as on a tablet the divine Pattern of our life, should also be able to imitate Him who painted it. For He was not one who, thinking one thing, did another; nor, while He considered one thing to be right, taught another. But whatever things were truly useful and right, these He both taught and did.

CHAPTER V.-CHRIST, BY PRESERVING HIS FLESH INCORRUPT IN VIRGINITY, DRAWS TO THE EXERCISE OF VIRGINITY; THE SMALL NUMBER OF VIRGINS IN PROPORTION TO THE NUMBER OF SAINTS.

¹What then did the Lord, who is the Truth and the Light, take in hand when He came down from heaven? He preserved the flesh which He had taken upon Him incorrupt in virginity, so that we also, if we would come to the likeness of God and Christ, should endeavour to honour virginity. For the likeness of God is the avoiding of corruption. And that the Word, when He was incarnate, became chief Virgin, in the same way as He was chief Shepherd and chief Prophet of the Church, the Christ-possessed John shows us, saying, in the Book of the Revelation, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His name and His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their

harp: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; " showing that the Lord is leader of the choir of virgins.

² And remark, in addition to this, how very great in the sight of God is the dignity of virginity: "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault," he says, "and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. And he clearly intends by this to teach us that the number of virgins was, from the beginning, restricted to so many, namely, a hundred and forty and four thousand, while the multitude of the other saints is innumerable. For let us consider what he means when discoursing of the rest. "I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. It is plain, therefore, as I said, that in the case of the other saints he introduces an unspeakable multitude, while in the case of those who are in a state of virginity he mentions only a very small number, so as to make a strong contrast with those who make up the innumerable number.

³ This, O Arete, is my discourse to you on the subject of virginity. But, if I have omitted anything, let Theophila, who succeeds me, supply the omission.

The Banquet, Discourse 2: Theophila

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.-MARRIAGE NOT ABOLISHED BY THE COMMENDATION OF VIRGINITY.

¹ And then, she said, Theophila spoke:-Since Marcella has excellently begun this discussion without sufficiently completing it, it is necessary that I should endeavour to put a finish to it. Now, the fact that man has advanced by degrees to virginity, God urging him on from time to time, seems to me to have been admirably proved; but I cannot say the same as to the assertion that from henceforth they should no longer beget children. For I think I have perceived clearly from the Scriptures that, after He had brought in virginity, the Word did not altogether abolish the generation of children; for although the moon may be greater than the stars, the light of the other stars is not destroyed by the moonlight. ² Let us begin with Genesis, that we may give its place of antiquity and supremacy to this scripture. Now the sentence and ordinance of God respecting the begetting of children is confessedly being fulfilled to this day, the Creator still fashioning man. For this is quite manifest, that God, like a painter, is at this very time working at the world, as the Lord also taught, "My Father worketh hitherto." But when the rivers shall cease to flow and fall into the reservoir of the sea, and the light shall be perfectly separated from the darkness,-for the separation is still going on,-and the dry land shall henceforth cease to bring forth its fruits with creeping things and four-footed beasts, and the predestined number of men shall be fulfilled; then from henceforth shall men abstain from the generation of children. But at present man must cooperate in the forming of the image of God, while the world exists and is still being formed; for it is said, "Increase and multiply." And we must not be offended at the ordinance of the Creator, from which, moreover, we ourselves have our being. For the casting of seed

into the furrows of the matrix is the beginning of the generation of men, so that bone taken from bone, and flesh from flesh, by an invisible power, are fashioned into another man. And in this way we must consider that the saying is fulfilled, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

CHAPTER II.-GENERATION SOMETHING AKIN TO THE FIRST
FORMATION OF EVE FROM THE SIDE AND NATURE OF ADAM; GOD THE
CREATOR OF MEN IN ORDINARY GENERATION.

¹ And this perhaps is what was shadowed forth by the sleep and trance of the first man, which prefigured the embraces of connubial love. When thirsting for children a man falls into a kind of trance, softened and subdued by the pleasures of generation as by sleep, so that again something drawn from his flesh and from his bones is, as I said, fashioned into another man. For the harmony of the bodies being disturbed in the embraces of love, as those tell us who have experience of the marriage state, all the marrow-like and generative part of the blood, like a kind of liquid bone, coming together from all the members, worked into foam and curdled, is projected through the organs of generation into the living body of the female. And probably it is for this reason that a man is said to leave his father and his mother, since he is then suddenly unmindful of all things when united to his wife in the embraces of love, he is overcome by the desire of generation, offering his side to the divine Creator to take away from it, so that the father may again appear in the son.

² Wherefore, if God still forms man, shall we not be guilty of audacity if we think of the generation of children as something offensive, which the Almighty Himself is not ashamed to make use of in working with His undefiled hands; for He says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; " and to Job, "Didst thou take clay and form a living creature, and make it speak upon the earth? " and Job draws near to Him in supplication, saying, "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me." Would it not, then, be absurd to forbid marriage unions, seeing that we expect that after us there will be martyrs, and those who shall oppose the evil one, for whose sake also the Word promised that He would shorten those days? For if the generation of children henceforth had seemed evil to God, as you said, for what reason will those who have come into existence in opposition to the divine decree and will be able to appear well-pleasing to God? And must not that which is begotten be something spurious, and not a creature of God, if, like

a counterfeit coin, it is moulded apart from the intention and ordinance of the lawful authority? And so we concede to men the power of forming men.

CHAPTER III.-AN AMBIGUOUS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE; NOT ONLY THE FAITHFUL BUT EVEN PRELATES SOMETIMES ILLEGITIMATE.

¹But Marcella, interrupting, said, "O Theophila, there appears here a great mistake, and something contrary to what you have said; and do you think to escape under cover of the cloud which you have thrown around you? For there comes that argument, which perhaps any one who addresses you as a very wise person will bring forward: What do you say of those who are begotten unlawfully in adultery? For you laid it down that it was inconceivable and impossible for any one to enter into the world unless he was introduced by the will of the divine Ruler, his frame being prepared for him by God. And that you may not take refuge behind a safe wall, bringing forward the Scripture which says, 'As for the children of the adulterers, they shall not come to their perfection,' he will answer you easily, that we often see those who are unlawfully begotten coming to perfection like ripe fruit.

²And if, again, you answer sophistically, 'O, my friend, by those who come not to perfection I understand being perfected in Christ-taught righteousness; 'he will say, 'But, indeed, my worthy friend, very many who are begotten of unrighteous seed are not only numbered among those who are gathered into the flock of the brethren, but are often called even to preside over them. Since, then, it is clear, and all testify, that those who are born of adultery do come to perfection, we must not imagine that the Spirit was teaching respecting conceptions and births, but rather perhaps concerning those who adulterate the truth, who, corrupting the Scriptures by false doctrines, bring forth an imperfect and immature wisdom, mixing their error with piety.' And, therefore, this plea being taken away from you, come now and tell us if those who are born of adultery are begotten by the will of God; for you said that it was impossible that the offspring of a man should be brought to perfection unless the Lord formed it and gave it life."

CHAPTER IV.-HUMAN GENERATION, AND THE WORK OF GOD THEREIN SET FORTH.

¹Theophila, as though caught round the middle by a strong antagonist, grew giddy, and with difficulty recovering herself, replied, "You ask a question, my worthy friend, which needs to be solved by an example, that you may still better understand how the creative power of God, pervading all

things, is more especially the real cause in the generation of men, making those things to grow which are planted in the productive earth. For that which is sown is not to be blamed, but he who sows in a strange soil by unlawful embraces, as though purchasing a slight pleasure by shamefully selling his own seed. For imagine our birth into the world to be like some such thing as a house having its entrance lying close to lofty mountains; and that the house extends a great way down, far from the entrance, and that it has many holes behind, and that in this part it has circular." "I imagine it," said Marcella. "Well, then, suppose that a modeller seated within is fashioning many statues; imagine, again, that the substance of clay is incessantly brought to him from without, through the holes, by many men who do not any of them see the artist himself. Now suppose the house to be covered with mist and clouds, and nothing visible to those who are outside but only the holes." "Let this also be supposed," she said. "And that each one of those who are labouring together to provide the clay has one hole allotted to himself, into which he alone has to bring and deposit his own clay, not touching any other hole. And if, again, he shall officiously endeavour to open that which is allotted to another, let him be threatened with fire and scourges.

2 "Well, now, consider further what comes after this: the modeller within going round to the holes and taking privately for his modelling the clay which he finds at each hole, and having in a certain number of months made his model, giving it back through the same hole; having this for his rule, that every lump of clay which is capable of being moulded shall be worked up indifferently, even if it be unlawfully thrown by any one through another's hole, for the clay has done no wrong, and, therefore, as being blameless, should be moulded and formed; but that he who, in opposition to the ordinance and law, deposited it in another's hole, should be punished as a criminal and transgressor. For the clay should not be blamed, but he who did this in violation of what is right; for, through incontinence, having carried it away, he secretly, by violence, deposited it in another's hole." "You say most truly."

CHAPTER V.-THE HOLY FATHER FOLLOWS UP THE SAME ARGUMENT.

1 And now that these things are completed, it remains for you to apply this picture, my wisest of friends, to the things which have been already spoken of; comparing the house to the invisible nature of our generation, and the entrance adjacent to the mountains to the sending down of our souls from

heaven, and their descent into the bodies; the holes to the female sex, and the modeller to the creative power of God, which, under the cover of generation, making use of our nature, invisibly forms us men within, working the garments for the souls. Those who carry the clay represent the male sex in the comparison; when thirsting for children, they bring and cast in seed into the natural channels of the female, as those in the comparison cast clay into the holes. For the seed, which, so to speak, partakes of a divine creative power, is not to be thought guilty of the incentives to incontinence; and art always works up the matter submitted to it; and nothing is to be considered as evil in itself, but becomes so by the act of those who used it in such a way; for when properly and purely made use of, it comes out pure, but if disgracefully and improperly, then it becomes disgraceful. For how did iron, which was discovered for the benefit of agriculture and the arts, injure those who sharpened it for murderous battles?

2 Or how did gold, or silver, or brass, and, to take it collectively, the whole of the workable earth, injure those who, ungratefully towards their Creator, make a wrong use of them by turning parts of them into various kinds of idols? And if any one should supply wool from that which had been stolen to the weaving art, that art, regarding this one thing only, manufactures the material submitted to it, if it will receive the preparation, rejecting nothing of that which is serviceable to itself, since that which is stolen is here not to be blamed, being lifeless. And, therefore, the material itself is to be wrought and adorned, but he who is discovered to have abstracted it unjustly should be punished. So, in like manner, the violators of marriage, and those who break the strings of the harmony of life, as of a harp, raging with lust, and letting loose their desires in adultery, should themselves be tortured and punished, for they do a great wrong stealing from the gardens of others the embraces of generation; but the seed itself, as in the case of the wool, should be formed and endowed with life.

CHAPTER VI.—GOD CARES EVEN FOR ADULTEROUS BIRTHS; ANGELS
GIVEN TO THEM AS GUARDIANS.

But what need is there to protract the argument by using such examples? for nature could not thus, in a little time, accomplish so great a work without divine help. For who gave to the bones their fixed nature? and who bound the yielding members with nerves, to be extended and relaxed at the joints? or who prepared channels for the blood, and a soft windpipe for the breath?

or what god caused the humours to ferment, mixing them with blood and forming the soft flesh out of the earth, but only the Supreme Artist making us to be man, the rational and living image of Himself, and forming it like wax, in the womb, from moist slight seed? or by whose providence was it that the foetus was not suffocated by damp when shut up within, in the connexion of the vessels? or who, after it was brought forth and had come into the light, changed it from weakness and smallness to size, and beauty, and strength, unless God Himself, the Supreme Artist, as I said, making by His creative power copies of Christ, and living pictures? Whence, also, we have received from the inspired writings, that those who are begotten, even though it be in adultery, are committed to guardian angels. But if they came into being in opposition to the will and the decree of the blessed nature of God, how should they be delivered over to angels, to be nourished with much gentleness and indulgence? and how, if they had to accuse their own parents, could they confidently, before the judgment seat of Christ, invoke Him and say, "Thou didst not, O Lord, grudge us this common light; but these appointed us to death, despising Thy command?" "For," He says, "children begotten of unlawful beds are witnesses of wickedness against their parents at their trial."

CHAPTER VII.-THE RATIONAL SOUL FROM GOD HIMSELF; CHASTITY
NOT THE ONLY GOOD, ALTHOUGH THE BEST AND MOST HONOURED.

1 And perhaps there will be room for some to argue plausibly among those who are wanting in discrimination and judgment, that this fleshly garment of the soul, being planted by men, is shaped spontaneously apart from the sentence of God. If, however, he should teach that the immortal being of the soul also is sown along with the mortal body, he will not be believed; for the Almighty alone breathes into man the undying and undecaying part, as also it is He alone who is Creator of the invisible and indestructible. For, He says, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And those artificers who, to the destruction of men, make images in human form, not perceiving and knowing their own Maker, are blamed by the Word, which says, in the Book of Wisdom, a book full of all virtue, "his heart is ashes, his hope is more vile than earth, and his life of less value than clay; forasmuch as he knew not his Maker, and Him that inspired into him an active soul, and breathed in a living spirit;" that is, God, the Maker of all men; therefore, also, according to the apostle, He "will have all men to be

saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. And now, although this subject be scarcely completed, yet there are others which remain to be discussed.

²For when one thoroughly examines and understands those things which happen to man according to his nature, he will know not to despise the procreation of children, although he applauds chastity, and prefers it in honour. For although honey be sweeter and more pleasant than other things, we are not for that reason to consider other things bitter which are mixed up in the natural sweetness of fruits. And, in support of these statements, I will bring forward a trustworthy witness, namely, Paul, who says, "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth bet ter. Now the word, in setting forth that which is better and sweeter, did not intend to take away the inferior, but arranges so as to assign to each its own proper use and advantage. For there are some to whom it is not given to attain virginity; and there are others whom He no longer wills to be excited by procreations to lust, and to be defiled, but henceforth to meditate and to keep the mind upon the transformation of the body to the likeness of angels, when they "neither marry nor are given in marriage," according to the infallible words of the Lord; since it is not given to all to attain that undefiled state of being a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, but manifestly to those only who are able to preserve the ever-blooming and unfading flower of virginity.

³For it is the custom of the prophetic Word to compare the Church to a flower covered and variegated meadow, adorned and crowned not only with the flowers of virginity, but also with those of child-bearing and of continence; for it is written, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours." ⁴These words, O Arete, I bring according to my ability to this discussion in behalf of the truth. And when Theophila had thus spoken, Theopatra said that applause arose from all the virgins approving of her discourse; and that when they became silent, after a long pause, Thaleia arose, for to her had been assigned the third place in the contest, that which came after Theophila. And she then, as I think, followed, and spoke.

The Banquet, Discourse 3: Thaleia

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.—PASSAGES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE COMPARED.

¹ You seem to me, O Theophila, to excel all in action and in speech, and to be second to none in wisdom. For there is no one who will find fault with your discourse, however contentious and contradictory he may be. Yet, while everything else seems rightly spoken, one thing, my friend, distresses and troubles me, considering that that wise and most spiritual man—I mean Paul—would not vainly refer to Christ and the Church the union of the first man and woman, if the Scripture meant nothing higher than what is conveyed by the mere words and the history; for if we are to take the Scripture as a bare representation wholly referring to the union of man and woman, for what reason should the apostle, calling these things to remembrance, and guiding us, as I opine, into the way of the Spirit, allegorize the history of Adam and Eve as having a reference to Christ and the Church? For the passage in Genesis reads thus: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. But the apostle considering this passage, by no means, as I said, intends to take it according to its mere natural sense, as referring to the union of man and woman, as you do;

² for you, explaining the passage in too natural a sense, laid down that the Spirit is speaking only of conception and births; that the bone taken from the bones was made another man, and that living creatures coming together swell like trees at the time of conception. But he, more spiritually referring the passage to Christ, thus teaches: "He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it,

even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

CHAPTER II.-THE DIGRESSIONS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL; THE
CHARACTER OF HIS DOCTRINE: NOTHING IN IT CONTRADICTORY;
CONDEMNATION OF ORIGEN, WHO WRONGLY TURNS EVERYTHING INTO
ALLEGORY.

¹ Let it not disturb you, if, in discussing one class of subjects, he, i.e., Paul, should pass over into another, so as to appear to mix them up, and to import matters foreign to the subject under consideration, departing from the question, as now for instance. For wishing, as it seems, to strengthen most carefully the argument on behalf of chastity, he prepares the mode of argument beforehand, beginning with the more persuasive mode of speech. For the character of his speech being very various, and arranged for the purpose of progressive proof, begins gently, but flows forward into a style which is loftier and more magnificent. And then, again changing to what is deep, he sometimes finishes with what is simple and easy, and sometimes with what is more difficult and delicate; and yet introducing nothing which is foreign to the subject by these changes, but, bringing them all together according to a certain marvellous relationship, he works into one the question which is set forth as his subject. It is needful, then, that I should more accurately unfold the meaning of the apostle's arguments, yet rejecting nothing of what has been said before. For you seem to me, O Theophila, to have discussed those words of the Scripture amply and clearly, and to have set them forth as they are without mistake.

² For it is a dangerous thing wholly to despise the literal meaning, as has been said, and especially of Genesis, where the unchangeable decrees of God for the constitution of the universe are set forth, in agreement with which, even until now, the world is perfectly ordered, most beautifully in accordance with a perfect rule, until the Lawgiver Himself having re-arranged it, wishing to order it anew, shall break up the first laws of nature by a fresh disposition. But, since it is not fitting to leave the demonstration of the argument unexamined-and, so to speak, half-lame-come let us, as it were completing our pair, bring forth the analogical sense, looking more deeply into

the Scripture; for Paul is not to be despised when he passes over the literal meaning, and shows that the words extend to Christ and the Church.

CHAPTER III.—COMPARISON INSTITUTED BETWEEN THE FIRST AND
SECOND ADAM.

And, first, we must inquire if Adam can be likened to the Son of God, when he was found in the transgression of the Fall, and heard the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." For how shall he be considered "the first-born of every creature," who, after the creation of the earth and the firmament, was formed out of clay? And how shall he be admitted to be "the tree of life" who was cast out for his transgression, lest "he should again stretch forth his hand and eat of it, and live forever?" For it is necessary that a thing which is likened unto anything else, should in many respects be similar and analogous to that of which it is the similitude, and not have its constitution opposite and dissimilar. For one who should venture to compare the uneven to the even, or harmony to discord, would not be considered rational. But the even should be compared to that which in its nature is even, although it should be even only in a small measure; and the white to that which in its nature is white, even although it should be very small, and should show but moderately the whiteness by reason of which it is called white. Now, it is beyond all doubt clear to every one, that that which is sinless and incorrupt is even, and harmonious, and bright as wisdom; but that that which is mortal and sinful is uneven and discordant, and cast out as guilty and subject to condemnation.

CHAPTER IV.—SOME THINGS HERE HARD AND TOO SLIGHTLY TREATED,
AND APPARENTLY NOT SUFFICIENTLY BROUGHT OUT ACCORDING TO
THE RULE OF THEOLOGY.

Such, then, I consider to be the objections urged by many who, despising, as it seems, the wisdom of Paul, dislike the comparing of the first man to Christ. For come, let us consider how rightly Paul compared Adam to Christ, not only considering him to be the type and image, but also that Christ Himself became the very same thing, because the Eternal Word fell upon Him. For it was fitting that the first-born of God, the first shoot, the only-begotten, even the wisdom of God, should be joined to the first-formed man, and first and first-born of mankind, and should become incarnate. And this was Christ, a man filled with the pure and perfect God-head, and God received into man. For it was most suitable that the oldest of

the Aeons and the first of the Archangels, when about to hold communion with men, should dwell in the oldest and the first of men, even Adam. And thus, when renovating those things which were from the beginning, and forming them again of the Virgin by the Spirit, He frames the same just as at the beginning. When the earth was still virgin and untilled, God, taking mould, formed the reasonable creature from it without seed.

CHAPTER V.-A PASSAGE OF JEREMIAH EXAMINED.

And here I may adduce the prophet Jeremiah as a trustworthy and lucid witness, who speaks thus: "Then I went down to the potter's house; and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." For when Adam, having been formed out of clay, was still soft and moist, and not yet, like a tile, made hard and incorruptible, sin ruined him, flowing and dropping down upon him like water. And therefore God, moistening him afresh and forming anew the same clay to His honour, having first hardened and fixed it in the Virgin's womb, and united and mixed it with the Word, brought it forth into life no longer soft and broken; lest, being overflowed again by streams of corruption from without, it should become soft, and perish as the Lord in His teaching shows in the parable of the finding of the sheep; where my Lord says to those standing by, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

CHAPTER VI.-THE WHOLE NUMBER OF SPIRITUAL SHEEP; MAN A SECOND CHOIR, AFTER THE ANGELS, TO THE PRAISE OF GOD; THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP EXPLAINED.

1 Now, since He truly was and is, being in the beginning with God, and being God, He is the chief Commander and Shepherd of the heavenly ones, whom all reasonable creatures obey and attend, who tends in order and numbers the multitudes of the blessed angels. For this is the equal and perfect number of immortal creatures, divided according to their races and tribes, man also being here taken into the flock. For he also was created without corruption, that he might honour the king and maker of all things,

responding to the shouts of the melodious angels which came from heaven. But when it came to pass that, by transgressing the commandment (of God), he suffered a terrible and destructive fall, being thus reduced to a state of death, for this reason the Lord says that He came from heaven into (a human) life, leaving the ranks and the armies of angels. For the mountains are to be explained by the heavens, and the ninety and nine sheep by the principalities and powers which the Captain and Shepherd left when He went down to seek the lost one. For it remained that man should be included in this catalogue and number, the Lord lifting him up and wrapping him round, that he might not again, as I said, be overflowed and swallowed up by the waves of deceit.

2 For with this purpose the Word assumed the nature of man, that, having overcome the serpent, He might by Himself destroy the condemnation which had come into being along with man's ruin. For it was fitting that the Evil One should be overcome by no other, but by him whom he had deceived, and whom he was boasting that he held in subjection, because no otherwise was it possible that sin and condemnation should be destroyed, unless that same man on whose account it had been said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shall return," should be created anew, and undo the sentence which for his sake had gone forth on all, that "as in Adam" at first "all die, even so" again "in Christ," who assumed the nature and position of Adam, should "all be made alive."

CHAPTER VII.-THE WORKS OF CHRIST, PROPER TO GOD AND TO MAN,
THE WORKS OF HIM WHO IS ONE.

1 And now we seem to have said almost enough on the fact that man has become the organ and clothing of the Only-begotten, and what He was who came to dwell in him. But the fact that there is no moral inequality or discord may again be considered briefly from the beginning. For he speaks well who says that that is in its own nature good and righteous and holy, by participation of which other things become good, and that wisdom is in connection with God, and that, on the other hand, sin is unholy and unrighteous and evil. For life and death, corruption and incorruption, are two things in the highest degree opposed to each other. For life is a moral equality, but corruption an inequality; and righteousness and prudence a harmony, but unrighteousness and folly a discord. Now, man being between these is neither righteousness itself, nor unrighteousness; but being placed midway

between incorruption and corruption, to whichever of these he may incline is said to partake of the nature of that which has laid hold of him. Now, when he inclines to corruption, he becomes corrupt and mortal, and when to incorruption, he becomes incorrupt and immortal. For, being placed midway between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of the Fruit of which he tasted, he was changed into the nature of the latter, himself being neither the tree of life nor that of corruption;

² but having been shown forth as mortal, from his participation in and presence with corruption, and, again, as incorrupt and immortal by connection with and participation in life; as Paul also taught, saying, "Corruption shall not inherit incorruption, nor death life," rightly defining corruption and death to be that which corrupts and kills, and not that which is corrupted and dies; and incorruption and life that which gives life and immortality, and not that which receives life and immortality. And thus man is neither a discord and an inequality, nor an equality and a harmony. But when he received discord, which is transgression and sin, he became discordant and unseemly; but when he received harmony, that is righteousness, he became a harmonious and seemly organ, in order that the Lord, the Incorruption which conquered death, might harmonize the resurrection with the flesh, not suffering it again to be inherited by corruption. And on this point also let these statements suffice.

CHAPTER VIII.-THE BONES AND FLESH OF WISDOM; THE SIDE OUT OF WHICH THE SPIRITUAL EVE IS FORMED, THE HOLY SPIRIT; THE WOMAN' THE HELP-MEET OF ADAM; VIRGINS BETROTHED TO CHRIST.

¹ For it has been already established by no contemptible arguments from Scripture, that the first man may be properly referred to Christ Himself, and is no longer a type and representation and image of the Only-begotten, but has become actually Wisdom and the Word. ² For man, having been composed, like water, of wisdom and life, has become identical with the very same untainted light which poured into him. Whence it was that the apostle directly referred to Christ the words which had been spoken of Adam. For thus will it be most certainly agreed that the Church is formed out of His bones and flesh; and it was for this cause that the Word, leaving His Father in heaven, came down to be "joined to His wife; " and slept in the trance of His passion, and willingly suffered death for her, that He might present the Church to Himself glorious and blameless, having cleansed her by the laver,

for the receiving of the spiritual and blessed seed, which is sown by Him who with whispers implants it in the depths of the mind; and is conceived and formed by the Church, as by a woman. so as to give birth and nourishment to virtue. For in this way, too, the command, "Increase and multiply," is duly fulfilled, the Church increasing daily in greatness and beauty and multitude, by the union and communion of the Word who now still comes down to us and falls into a trance by the memorial of His passion;

3 for otherwise the Church could not conceive believers, and give them new birth by the laver of regeneration, unless Christ, emptying Himself for their sake, that He might be contained by them, as I said, through the recapitulation of His passion, should die again, coming down from heaven, and being "joined to His wife," the Church, should provide for a certain power being taken from His own side, so that all who are built up in Him should grow up, even those who are born again by the laver, receiving of His bones and of His flesh, that is, of His holiness and of His glory. For he who says that the bones and flesh of Wisdom are understanding and virtue, says most rightly; and that the side is the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete, of whom the illuminated receiving are fitly born again to incorruption. For it is impossible for any one to be a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and to be chosen a member of Christ, unless the Word first came down upon him and fell into a trance, in order that he, being filled with the Spirit, and rising again from sleep with Him who was laid to sleep for his sake, should be able to receive renewal and restoration. For He may fitly be called the side of the Word, even the sevenfold Spirit of truth, according to the prophet;

4 of whom God taking, in the trance of Christ, that is, after His incarnation and passion, prepares a help-meet for Him -I mean the souls which are betrothed and given in marriage to Him. For it is frequently the case that the Scriptures thus call the assembly and mass of believers by the name of the Church, the more perfect in their progress being led up to be the one person and body of the Church. For those who are the better, and who embrace the truth more clearly, being delivered from the evils of the flesh, become, on account of their perfect purification and faith, a church and help-meet of Christ, betrothed and given in marriage to Him as a virgin, according to the apostle, so that receiving the pure and genuine seed of His doctrine, they may co-operate with Him, helping in preaching for the salvation of others. And those who are still imperfect and beginning their lessons, are born to

salvation, and shaped, as by mothers, by those who are more perfect, until they are brought forth and regenerated unto the greatness and beauty of virtue; and so these, in their turn making progress, having become a church, assist in labouring for the birth and nurture of other children, accomplishing in the receptacle of the soul, as in a womb, the blameless will of the Word.

CHAPTER IX.-THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE IN PAUL THE APOSTLE.

Now we should consider the case of the renowned Paul, that when he was not yet perfect in Christ, he was first born and suckled, Ananias preaching to him, and renewing him in baptism, as the history in the Acts relates. But when he was grown to a man, and was built up, then being moulded to spiritual perfection, he was made the help-meet and bride of the Word; and receiving and conceiving the seeds of life, he who was before a child, becomes a church and a mother, himself labouring in birth of those who, through him, believed in the Lord, until Christ was formed and born in them also. For he says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you;" and again, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel." It is evident, then, that the statement respecting Eve and Adam is to be referred to the Church and Christ. For this is truly a great mystery and a supernatural, of which I, from my weakness and dulness, am unable to speak, according to its worth and greatness. Nevertheless, let us attempt it. It remains that I speak to you on what follows, and of its signification.

CHAPTER X.-THE DOCTRINE OF THE SAME APOSTLE CONCERNING PURITY.

Now Paul, when summoning all persons to sanctification and purity, in this way referred that which had been spoken concerning the first man and Eve in a secondary sense to Christ and the Church, in order to silence the ignorant, now deprived of all excuse. For men who are incontinent in consequence of the uncontrolled impulses of sensuality in them, dare to force the Scriptures beyond their true meaning, so as to twist into a defence of their incontinence the saying, "Increase and multiply;" and the other, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother;" and they are not ashamed to run counter to the Spirit, but, as though born for this purpose, they kindle up the smouldering and lurking passion, fanning and provoking it; and therefore he, cutting off very sharply these dishonest follies and invented excuses, and having arrived at the subject of instructing them how men should behave to

their wives, showing that it should be as Christ did to the Church, "who gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word," he referred back to Genesis, mentioning the things spoken concerning the first man, and explaining these things as bearing on the subject before him, that he might take away occasion for the abuse of these passages from those who taught the sensual gratification of the body, under the pretext of begetting children.

CHAPTER XI.-THE SAME ARGUMENT.

For consider, O virgins, how he, desiring with all his might that believers in Christ should be chaste, endeavours by many arguments to show them the dignity of chastity, as when he says, Now, concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman," thence showing already very clearly that it is good not to touch a woman, laying it down. and setting it forth unconditionally. But afterwards, being aware of the weakness of the less continent, and their passion for intercourse, he permitted those who are unable to govern the flesh to use their own wives, rather than, shamefully transgressing, to give themselves up to fornication. Then, after having given this permission, he immediately added these words, "that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency; "which means, "if you, such as you are, cannot, on account of the incontinence and softness of your bodies, be perfectly continent, I will rather permit you to have intercourse with your own wives, lest, professing perfect continence, ye be constantly tempted by the evil one, and be inflamed with lust after other men's wives."

CHAPTER XII.-PAUL AN EXAMPLE TO WIDOWS, AND TO THOSE WHO DO NOT LIVE WITH THEIR WIVES.

1 Come, now, and let us examine more carefully the very words which are before us, and observe that the apostle did not grant these things unconditionally to all, but first laid down the reason on account of which he was led to this. For, having set forth that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman," he added immediately, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife" -that is, "on account of the fornication which would arise from your being unable to restrain your voluptuousness" -and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, ex-

cept it tie with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." And this is very carefully considered. "By permission" he says, showing that he was giving counsel, "not of command; "for he receives command respecting chastity and the not touching of a woman, but permission respecting those who are unable, as I said, to chasten their appetites. These things, then, he lays down concerning men and women who are married to one spouse, or who shall hereafter be so; but we must now examine carefully the apostle's language respecting men who have lost their wives, and women who have lost their husbands, and what he declares on this subject.

²"I say therefore," he goes on, "to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." Here also he persisted in giving the preference to continence. For, taking himself as a notable example, in order to stir them up to emulation, he challenged his hearers to this state of life, teaching that it was better that a man who had been bound to one wife should henceforth remain single, as he also did. But if, on the other hand, this should be a matter of difficulty to any one, on account of the strength of animal passion, he allows that one who is in such a condition may, "by permission," contract a second marriage; not as though he expressed the opinion that a second marriage was in itself good, but judging it better than burning. Just as though, in the fast which prepares for the Easter celebration, one should offer food to another who was dangerously ill, and say, "In truth, my friend, it were fitting and good that you should bravely hold out like us, and partake of the same things, for it is forbidden even to think of food to-day; but since you are held down and weakened by disease, and cannot bear it, therefore, 'by permission, ' we advise you to eat food, lest, being quite unable, from sickness, to hold up against the desire for food, you perish." Thus also the apostle speaks here, first saying that he wished all were healthy and continent, as he also was, but afterwards allowing a second marriage to those who are burdened with the disease of the passions, lest they should be wholly defiled by fornication, goaded on by the itchings of the organs of generation to promiscuous intercourse, considering such a second marriage far preferable to burning and indecency.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE DOCTRINE OF PAUL CONCERNING VIRGINITY
EXPLAINED.

¹I have now brought to an end what I have to say respecting continence and marriage and chastity, and intercourse with men, and in which of these there is help towards progress in righteousness; but it still remains to speak concerning virginity—if, indeed, anything be prescribed on this subject. Let us then treat this subject also; for it stands thus: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. Having given his opinion with great caution respecting virginity, and being about to advise him who wished it to give his virgin in marriage, so that none of those things which conduce to sanctification should be of necessity and by compulsion, but according to the free purpose of the soul. for this is acceptable to God, he does not wish these things to be said as by authority, and as the mind of the Lord, with reference to the giving of a virgin in marriage;

²for after he had said, "if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned," directly afterwards, with the greatest caution, he modified his statement, showing that he had advised these things by human permission, and not by divine. So, immediately after he had said, "if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned," he added, "such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. By which he means: "I sparing you, such as you are, consented to these things, because you have chosen to think thus of them, that I may not seem to hurry you on by violence, and compel any one to this. But yet if it shall please you who find chastity hard to bear, rather to turn to marriage; I consider it to be profitable for you to restrain yourselves in the gratification of the flesh, not making your marriage an occasion for abusing your own vessels to uncleanness. Then he adds, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none. And again, going on and challenging them to the same things, he confirmed his statement, powerfully supporting the state of virginity, and adding expressly the following words to those which he had spoken before, he exclaimed, "I would have you

without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord: but he that is married careth for f the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

³ There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. Now it is clear to all, without any doubt, that to care for the things of the Lord and to please God, is much better than to care for the things of the world and to please one's wife. For who is there so foolish and blind. as not to perceive in this statement the higher praise which Paul accords to chastity? "And this," he says, "I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely."

CHAPTER XIV.-VIRGINITY A GIFT OF GOD: THE PURPOSE OF VIRGINITY
NOT RASHLY TO BE ADOPTED BY ANY ONE.

¹ Consider besides how, in addition to the words already quoted, he commends the state of virginity as a gift of God. Wherefore he rejects those of the more incontinent, who, under the influence of vain-glory, would advance to this state, advising them to marry, lest in their time of manly strength, the flesh stirring up the desires and passions, they should be goaded on to defile the soul. For let us consider what he lays down: " But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely towards his virgin," he says, " if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let him marry; "properly here preferring marriage to "uncomeliness," in the case of those who had chosen the state of virginity, but afterwards finding it intolerable and grievous, and in word boasting of their perseverance before men, out of shame, but indeed no longer having the power to persevere in the life of a eunuch. But for him who of his own free will and purpose decides to preserve his flesh in virgin purity, "having no necessity," that is, passion calling forth his loins to intercourse, for there are, as it seems, differences in men's bodies; such a one contending and struggling, and zealously abiding by his profession. and admirably fulfilling it, he exhorts to abide and to preserve it, according the highest prize to virginity. For he that is able, he says, and ambitious to preserve his flesh pure, does better; but he that is unable, and enters into marriage lawfully, and does not indulge in secret corruption, does well. And now enough has been said on these subjects.

²Let any one who will, take in his hand the Epistle to the Corinthians, and, examining all its passages one by one, then consider what we have said, comparing them together, as to whether there is not a perfect harmony and agreement between them. These things, according to my power, O Arete, I offer to thee as my contribution on the subject of chastity. Euboulios. Through many things, O Gregorion, she has scarcely come to the subject, having measured and crossed a mighty sea of words. Gregorion. So it seems; but come, I must mention the rest of what was said in order, going through it and repeating it, while I seem to have the sound of it dwelling in my ears, before it flies away and escapes; for the remembrance of things lately heard is easily effaced from the aged. Euboulios. Say on, then; for we have come to have the pleasure of hearing these discourses.

³Gregorion. And then after, as you observed, Thaleia had descended from her smooth and unbroken course to the earth, Theopatra, she said, followed her in order, and spoke as follows. Discourse IV.-Theopatra.

CHAPTER I.-THE NECESSITY OF PRAISING VIRTUE, FOR THOSE WHO
HAVE THE POWER.

If the art of speaking, O virgins, always went by the same ways, and passed along the same path, there would be no way to avoid wearying you for one who persisted in the arguments which had already been urged. But since there are of arguments myriads of currents and ways, God inspiring us "at sundry times and in divers manners," who can have the choice of holding back or of being afraid? For he would not be free from blame to whom the gift has been given, if he failed to adorn that which is honourable with words of praise. Come then, we also, according to our gifts, will sing the brightest and most glorious star of Christ, which is chastity. For this way of the Spirit is very wide and large. Beginning, therefore, at the point from which we may say those things which are suitable and fitting to the subject before us, I let us from thence consider it.

CHAPTER II.-THE PROTECTION OF CHASTITY AND VIRGINITY
DIVINELY GIVEN TO MEN, THAT THEY MAY EMERGE FROM THE MIRE
OF VICES.

¹Now I at least seem to perceive that nothing has been such a means of restoring men to paradise, and of the change to incorruption, and of reconciliation to God, and such a means of salvation to men, by guiding us to life, as chastity. And I will now endeavour to show why I think so concerning

these things, that having heard distinctly the power of the grace already spoken of, you may know of how great blessings it has become the giver to us. Anciently, then, after the fall of man, when he was cast out by reason of his transgression, the stream of corruption poured forth abundantly, and running along in violent currents, not only fiercely swept along whatever touched it from without, but also rushing within it, overwhelmed the souls of men. And they, continuously exposed to this, were carried along dumb and stupid, neglecting to pilot their vessels, from having nothing firm to lay hold of. For the senses of the soul, as those have said who are learned in these things, when, being overcome by the excitements to passion which fall upon them from without, they receive the sudden bursts of the waves of folly which rush into them, being darkened turn aside from the divine course its whole vessel, which is by nature easily guided.

2 Wherefore God, pitying us who were in such a condition, and were able neither to stand nor to rise, sent down from heaven the best and most glorious help, virginity, that by it we might tie our bodies fast, like ships, and have a calm, coming to an anchorage without damage, as also the Holy Spirit witnesses. For this is said in the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm, where the souls send joyfully up to God a hymn of thanksgiving, as many as have been taken hold of and raised up to walk with Christ in heaven, that they might not be overwhelmed by the streams of the world and the flesh. Whence, also, they say that Pharaoh was a type of the devil in Egypt, since he mercilessly commanded the males to be cast into the river, but the females to be preserved alive. For the devil, ruling from Adam to Moses over this great Egypt, the world, took care to have the male and rational offspring of the soul carried away and destroyed by the streams of passions, but he longs for the carnal and irrational offspring to increase and multiply.

CHAPTER III.—THAT PASSAGE OF DAVID EXPLAINED; WHAT THE HARPS
HUNG UPON THE WILLOWS SIGNIFY; THE WILLOW A SYMBOL OF
CHASTITY; THE WILLOWS WATERED BY STREAMS.

1 But not to pass away from our subject, come, let us take in our hands and examine this psalm, which the pure and stainless souls sing to God, saying: "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof," clearly giving the name of harps to their bodies which they hung upon the branches of chastity, fastening them to the wood that they might not be

snatched away and dragged along again by the stream of incontinence. For Babylon, which is interpreted "disturbance "or" confusion," signifies this life around which the water flows, while we sit in the midst of which the water flows round us, as long as we are in the world, the rivers of evil always beating upon us. Wherefore, also, we are always fearful, and we groan and cry with weeping to God, that our harps may not be snatched off by the waves of pleasure, and slip down from the tree of chastity. For everywhere the divine writings take the willow as the type of chastity, because, when its flower is steeped in water, if it be drunk, it extinguishes whatever kindles sensual desires and passions within us, until it entirely renders barren, and makes every inclination to the begetting of children without effect, as also Homer indicated, for this reason calling the willows destructive of fruit. And in Isaiah the righteous are said to "spring up as willows by the water courses.

2 Surely, then, the shoot of virginity is raised to a great and glorious height, when the righteous, and he to whom it is given to preserve it and to cultivate it, bedewing it with wisdom, is watered by the gentlest streams of Christ. For as it is the nature of this tree to bud and grow through water, so it is the nature of virginity to blossom and grow to maturity when enriched by words, so that one can hang his body upon it.

CHAPTER IV.-THE AUTHOR GOES ON WITH THE INTERPRETATION OF
THE SAME PASSAGE.

1 If, then, the rivers of Babylon are the streams of voluptuousness, as wise men say, which confuse and disturb the soul, then the willows must be chastity, to which we may suspend and draw up the organs of lust which overbalance and weigh down the mind, so that they may not be borne down by the torrents of incontinence, and be drawn like worms to impurity and corruption. For God has bestowed upon us virginity as a most useful and a serviceable help towards incorruption, sending it as an ally to those who are contending for and longing after Zion, as the psalm shows, which is resplendent charity and the commandment respecting it, for Zion is interpreted "The commandment of the watchtower. Now, let us here enumerate the points which follow. For why do the souls declare that they were asked by those who led them captive to sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Surely because the Gospel teaches a holy and secret song, which sinners and adulterers sing to the Evil One. For they insult the commandments, accomplishing the will of the spirits of evil, and cast holy things to dogs, and pearls before

swine, in the same manner as those of whom the prophet says with indignation, "They read the law without; " for the Jews were not to read the law going forth out of the gates of Jerusalem or out of their houses;

²and for this reason the prophet blames them strongly, and cries that they were liable to condemnation, because, while they were transgressing the commandments, and acting impiously towards God, they were pretentiously reading the law, as if, forsooth, they were piously observing its precepts; but they did not receive it in their souls, holding it firmly with faith, but rejected it, denying it by their works. And hence they sing the Lord's song in a strange land, explaining the law by distorting and degrading it, expecting a sensual kingdom, and setting their hopes on this alien world, which the Word says will pass away, where those who carry them captive entice them with pleasures, lying in wait to deceive them.

CHAPTER V.-THE GIFTS OF VIRGINS, ADORNED WITH WHICH THEY ARE
PRESENTED TO ONE HUSBAND, CHRIST.

¹Now, those who sing the Gospel to senseless people seem to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, of which Christ is not the husbandman; but those who have put on and shone in the most pure and bright, and unmingled and pious and becoming, ornament of virginity, and are found barren and unproductive of unsettled and grievous passions, do not sing the song in a strange land; because they are not borne thither by their hopes, nor do they stick fast in the lusts of their mortal bodies, nor do they take a low view of the meaning of the commandments, but well and nobly, with a lofty disposition, they have regard to the promises which are above, thirsting for heaven as a congenial abode, whence God, approving their dispositions, promises with an oath to give them choice honours, appointing and establishing them "above His chief joy; "for He says thus: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy; "meaning by Jerusalem, as I said, these very undefiled and incorrupt souls, which, having with self-denial drawn in the pure draught of virginity with unpolluted lips, are "espoused to one husband," to be presented "as a chaste virgin to Christ" in heaven, "having gotten the victory, striving for undefiled rewards.

²Hence also the prophet Isaiah proclaims, saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Now these prom-

ises, it is evident to every one, will be fulfilled after the resurrection. For the Holy Spirit does not speak of that well-known town in Judea; but truly of that heavenly city, the blessed Jerusalem, which He declares to be the assembly of the souls which God plainly promises to place first, "above His chief joy," in the new dispensation, settling those who are clothed in the most white robe of virginity in the pure dwelling of unapproachable light; because they had it not in mind to put off their wedding garment-that is, to relax their minds by wandering thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.-VIRGINITY TO BE CULTIVATED AND COMMENDED IN
EVERY PLACE AND TIME.

Further, the expression in Jeremiah, "That a maid should not forget her ornaments, nor a bride her attire," shows that she should not give up or loosen the band of chastity through wiles and distractions. For by the heart are properly denoted our heart and mind. Now the breastband, the girdle which gathers together and keeps firm the purpose of the soul to chastity, is love to God, which our Captain and Shepherd, Jesus, who is also our Ruler and Bridegroom, O illustrious virgins, commands both you and me to hold fast unbroken and sealed up even to the end; for one will not easily find anything else a greater help to men than this possession, pleasing and grateful to God. There-fore, I say, that we should all exercise and honour chastity, and always cultivate and commend it. Let these first-fruits of my discourse suffice for thee, O Arete, in proof of my education and my zeal. "And I receive the gift," she said that Arete replied, "and bid Thallousa speak after thee; for I must have a discourse from each one of you." And she said that Thallousa, pausing a little, as though considering somewhat with herself, thus spoke.

The Banquet, Discourse 5: Thallousa

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.-THE OFFERING OF CHASTITY A GREAT GIFT.

I pray you, Arete, that you will give your assistance now too, that I may seem to speak something worthy in the first place of yourself, and then of those who are present. For I am persuaded, having thoroughly learnt it from the sacred writings, that the greatest and most glorious offering and gift, to which there is nothing comparable, which men can offer to God, is the life of virginity. For although many accomplished many admirable things, according to their vows, in the law, they alone were said to fulfil a great vow who were willing to offer themselves of their free-will. For the passage runs thus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when either man or woman shall separate themselves ... unto the Lord." One vows to offer gold and silver vessels for the sanctuary when he comes, another to offer the tithe of his fruits, another of his property, another the best of his flocks, another consecrates his being; and no one is able to vow a great vow to the Lord, but he who has offered himself entirely to God.

CHAPTER II. ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE OF A HEIFER THREE YEARS OLD, OF A GOAT, AND OF A RAM ALSO THREE YEARS OLD: ITS MEANING; EVERY AGE TO BE CONSECRATED TO GOD; THE THREEFOLD WATCH AND OUR AGE.

¹I must endeavour, O virgins, by a true exposition, to explain to you the mind of the Scripture according to its meaning. Now, he who watches over and restrains himself in part, and in part is distracted and wandering, is not wholly given up to God. Hence it is necessary that the perfect man offer up all, both the things of the soul and those of the flesh, so that he may be complete and not lacking. Therefore also God commands Abraham, "Take Me

an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon; "which is admirably said; for remark, that concerning those things, He also gives this command, Bring them Me and keep them free from the yoke, even thy soul uninjured, like a heifer, and your flesh, and your reason; the last like a goat, since he traverses lofty and precipitous places, and the other like a ram, that he may in nowise skip away, and fall and slip off from the right way. For thus shalt thou be perfect and blameless, O Abraham, when thou hast offered to Me thy soul, and thy sense, and thy mind, which He mentioned under the symbol of the heifer, the goat, and the ram of three years old, as though they represented the pure knowledge of the Trinity.

2 And perhaps He also symbolizes the beginning, the middle, and the end of our life and of our age, wishing as far as possible that men should spend their boyhood, their manhood, and their more advanced life purely, and offer them up to Him. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ commands in the Gospels, thus directing: "Let not your lights be extinguished, and let not your loins be loosed. Therefore also be ye like men who wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are ye, when he shall make you sit down, and shall come and serve you. And if he come in the second, or in the third watch, ye are blessed." For consider, O virgins, when He mentions three watches of the night, and His three comings, He shadows forth in symbol our three periods of life, that of the boy, of the full-grown man, and of the old man; so that if He should come and remove us from the world while spending our first period, that is, while we are boys, He may receive us ready and pure, having nothing amiss; and the second and the third in like manner. For the evening watch is the time of the budding and youth of man, when the reason begins to be disturbed and to be clouded by the changes of life, his flesh gaining strength and urging him to lust. The second is the time when, afterwards advancing to a full-grown man, he begins to acquire stability, and to make a stand against the turbulence of passion and self-conceit. And the third, when most of the imaginations and desires fade away, the flesh now withering and declining to old age.

CHAPTER III.-FAR BEST TO CULTIVATE VIRTUE FROM BOYHOOD.

Therefore, it is becoming that we should kindle the unquenchable light of faith in the heart, and gird our loins with purity, and watch and ever wait for

the Lord so that, if He should will to come and take any of us away in the first period of life, or in the second, or in the third, and should find us most ready, and working what He appointed, He may make us to lie down in the bosom of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Now Jeremiah says, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth;" and "that his soul should not depart from the Lord." It is good, indeed, from boyhood, to submit the neck to the divine Hand, and not to shake off, even to old age, the Rider who guides with pure mind, when the Evil One is ever dragging down the mind to that which is worse. For who is there that does not receive through the eyes, through the ears, through the taste and smell and touch, pleasures and delights, so as to become impatient of the control of continence as a driver, who checks and vehemently restrains the horse from evil? Another who turns his thoughts to other things will think differently; but we say that he offers himself perfectly to God who strives to keep the flesh undefiled from childhood, practising virginity; for it speedily brings great and much-desired gifts of hopes to those who strive for it, drying up the corrupting lusts and passions of the soul. But come, let us explain how we give ourselves up to the Lord.

CHAPTER IV.-PERFECT CONSECRATION AND DEVOTION TO GOD: WHAT
IT IS.

1 That which is laid down in the Book of Numbers, "greatly to vow a vow," serves to show, as, with a little more explanation, I proceed to prove, that chastity is the great vow above all vows. For then am I plainly consecrated altogether to the Lord, when I not only strive to keep the flesh untouched by intercourse, but also unspotted by other kinds of unseemliness. For "the unmarried woman," it is said, "careth for the things of the Lord, how she may please the Lord;" not merely that she may bear away the glory in part of not being maimed in her virtue, but in both parts, according to the apostle, that she may be sanctified in body and spirit, offering up, her members to the Lord. For let us say what it is to offer up oneself perfectly to the Lord. If, for instance, I open my mouth on some subjects, and close it upon others; thus, if I open it for the explanation of the Scriptures, for the praise of God, according to my power, in a true faith and with all due honour, and if I close it, putting a door and a watch upon it against foolish discourse, my mouth is kept pure, and is offered up to God. "My tongue is a pen. an organ of wisdom;

² for the Word of the Spirit writes by it in clearest letters, from the depth and power of the Scriptures, even the Lord, the swift Writer of the ages, that He quickly and swiftly registers and fulfils the counsel of the Father, hearing the words, "quickly spoil, swiftly plunder. To such a Scribe the words may be applied, "My tongue is a pen; "for a beautiful pen is sanctified and offered to Him, writing things more lovely than the poets and orators who confirm the doctrines of men. If, too, I accustom my eyes not to lust after the charms of the body, nor to take delight in unseemly sights, but to look up to the things which are above, then my eyes are kept pure, and are offered to the Lord. If I shut my ears against detraction and slanders, and open them to the word of God, having intercourse with wise men, then have I offered up my ears to the Lord. If I keep my hands from dishonourable dealing, from acts of covetousness and of licentiousness, then are my hands kept pure to God. If I withhold my steps from going in perverse ways, then have I offered up my feet, not going to the places of public resort and banquets, where wicked men are found, but into the right way, fulfilling something of the commands. What, then, remains to me, if I also keep the heart pure, offering up all its thoughts to God;

³ if I think no evil, if anger and wrath gain no rule over me, if I meditate in the law of the Lord day and night? And this is to preserve a great chastity, and to vow a great vow.

CHAPTER V.-THE VOW OF CHASTITY, AND ITS RITES IN THE LAW;
VINES, CHRIST, AND THE DEVIL.

¹ I will now endeavour to explain to you, O virgins, the rest of that which is prescribed; for this is attached to your duties, consisting of laws concerning virginity, which are useful as teaching how we should abstain, and how advance to virginity. For it is written thus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord; he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried, all the days of his separation. And this means, that he who has devoted and offered himself to the Lord shall not take of the fruits of the plant of evil, because of its natural tendency to produce intoxication and distraction of mind. For we perceive from the Scriptures two kinds of vines which were sep-

arate from each other, and were unlike. For the one is productive of immortality and righteousness; but the other of madness and insanity. The sober and joy-producing vine, from whose instructions, as from branches, there joyfully hang down clusters of graces, distilling love, is our Lord Jesus, who says expressly to the apostles, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches; and my Father is the husbandman.

2 But the wild and death-bearing vine is the devil, who drops down fury and poison and wrath, as Moses relates, writing concerning him, "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. The inhabitants of Sodom having gathered grapes from this, were goaded on to an unnatural and fruitless desire for males. Hence, also, in the time of Noah, men having given themselves tip to drunkenness, sank down into unbelief, and, being overwhelmed by the deluge, were drowned. And Cain, too, having drawn from this, stained his fratricidal hands, and defiled the earth with the blood of his own family. Hence, too, the heathen, becoming intoxicated, sharpen their passions for murderous battles; for man is not so much excited, nor goes so far astray through wine, as from anger and wrath. A man does not become intoxicated and go astray through wine, in the same way as he does from sorrow, or from love, or from incontinence. And therefore it is ordered that a virgin shall not taste of this vine, so that she may be sober and watchful from the cares of life, and may kindle the shining torch of the light of righteousness for the Word.

3 "Take heed to yourselves," says the Lord, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares, as a snare."

CHAPTER VI.-SIKERA, A MANUFACTURED AND SPURIOUS WINE, YET INTOXICATING; THINGS WHICH ARE AKIN TO SINS ARE TO BE AVOIDED BY A VIRGIN; THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (A SYMBOL OF) VIRGINS.

1 Moreover, it is not only forbidden to virgins in any way to touch those things which are made from that vine, but even such things as resemble them and are akin to them. For Sikera, which is manufactured, is called a spurious kind of wine, whether made of palms or of other fruit-trees. For in the same way that draughts of wine overthrow man's reason, so do these exceedingly; and to speak the plain truth, the wise are accustomed to call by the

name of Sikera all that produces drunkenness and distraction of mind, besides wine. In order, therefore, that the virgin may not, when guarding against those sins which are in their own nature evil, be defiled by those which are like them and akin to them, conquering the one and being conquered by the other, that is, decorating herself with textures of different cloths, or with stones and gold, and other decorations of the body, things which intoxicate the soul; on this account it is ordered that she do not give herself up to womanish weaknesses and laughter, exciting herself to wiles and foolish talking, which whirl the mind around and confuse it; as it is indicated in another place, "Ye shall not eat the hyaena and animals like it; nor the weasel and creatures of that kind." For this is the straight and direct way to heaven, not merely not to avoid any stumbling-block which would trip up and destroy men who are agitated by a desire for luxuries and pleasures, but also from such things as resemble them.

² Moreover, it has been handed down that the unbloody altar of God signifies the assembly of the chaste; thus virginity appears to be something great and glorious. Therefore it ought to be preserved undefiled and altogether pure, having no participation in the impurities of the flesh; but it should be set up before the presence of the testimony, gilded with wisdom, for the Holy of holies, sending forth a sweet savour of love to the Lord; for He says, "Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-sacrifices nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon."

CHAPTER VII.-THE CHURCH INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN THE SHADOWS
OF THE LAW AND THE REALITIES OF HEAVEN.

If the law, according to the apostle, is spiritual, containing the images "of future good things," come then, let us strip off the veil of the letter which is spread over it, and consider its naked and true meaning. The Hebrews were commanded to ornament the Tabernacle as a type of the Church, that they

might be able, by means of sensible things, to announce beforehand the image of divine things. For the pattern which was shown to Moses in the mount, to which he was to have regard in fashioning the Tabernacle, was a kind of accurate representation of the heavenly dwelling, which we now perceive more clearly than through types, yet more darkly than if we saw the reality. For not yet, in our present condition, has the truth come unmingled to men, who are here unable to bear the sight of pure immortality, just as we cannot bear to look upon the rays of the sun. And the Jews declared that the shadow of the image (of the heavenly things which was afforded to them), was the third from the reality; but we clearly behold the image of the heavenly order; for the truth will be accurately made manifest after the resurrection, when we shall see the heavenly tabernacle (the city in heaven "whose builder and maker is God" "face to face," and not "darkly" and "in part."

CHAPTER VIII.-THE DOUBLE ALTAR, WIDOWS AND VIRGINS; GOLD THE
SYMBOL OF VIRGINITY.

¹Now the Jews prophesied our state, but we foretell the heavenly; since the Tabernacle was a symbol of the Church, and the Church of heaven. Therefore, these things being so, and the Tabernacle being taken for a type of the Church, as I said, it is fitting that the altars should signify some of the things in the Church. And we have already compared the brazen altar to the company and circuit of widows; for they are a living altar of God, to which they bring calves and tithes, and free-will offerings, as a sacrifice to the Lord; but the golden altar within the Holy of holies, before the presence of the testimony, on which it is forbidden to offer sacrifice and libation, has reference to those in a state of virginity, as those who have their bodies preserved pure, like unalloyed gold, from carnal intercourse. Now gold is commended for two reasons: the first, that it does not rust, and the second, that in its colour it seems in a measure to resemble the rays of the sun; and thus it is suitably a symbol of virginity, which does not admit any stain or spot, but ever shines forth with the light of the Word. Therefore, also, it stands nearer to God within the Holy of holies, and before the veil, with undefiled hands, like incense, offering up prayers to the Lord, acceptable as a sweet savour; as also John indicated, saying that the incense in the vials of the four-and-twenty elders were the prayers of the saints. This, then, I offer to thee, O Arete, on the spur of the moment, according to my ability, on the subject of chastity.

² And when Thallousa had said this, Theopatra said that Arete touched Agathe with her sceptre, and that she, perceiving it, immediately arose and answered.

The Banquet, Discourse 6: Agathe

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.-THE EXCELLENCE OF THE ABIDING GLORY OF VIRGINITY;
THE SOUL MADE IN THE IMAGE OF THE IMAGE OF GOD, THAT IS OF HIS
SON; THE DEVIL A SUITOR FOR THE SOUL.

¹ With great confidence of being able to persuade, and to carry on this admirable discourse, O Arete, if thou go with me, will I also endeavour, according to my ability, to contribute something to the discussion of the subject before us; something commensurate to my own power, and not to be compared with that which has already been spoken. For I should be unable to put forth in philosophizing anything that could compete with those things which have already been so variously and brilliantly worked out. For I shall seem to bear away the reproach of silliness, if I make an effort to match myself with my superiors in wisdom. If, however, you will bear even with those who speak as they can, I will endeavour to speak, not lacking at least in good will. And here let me begin. ² We have all come into this world, O virgins, endowed with singular beauty, which has a relationship and affinity to divine wisdom. For the souls of men do then most accurately resemble Him who begat and formed them, when, reflecting the unsullied representation of His likeness, and the features of that countenance, to which God looking formed them to have an immortal and indestructible shape, they remain such. For the unbegotten and incorporeal beauty, which neither begins nor is corruptible, but is unchangeable, and grows not old and has need of nothing, He resting in Himself, and in the very light which is in unspeakable and inapproachable places, embracing all things in the circumference of His power, creating and arranging, made the soul after the image of His image. Therefore, also, it is reasonable and immortal. For being made after the image of the Only-begotten, as I said, it has an unsurpassable beauty, and there-

fore evil spirits love it, and plot and strive to defile its godlike and lovely image, as the prophet Jeremiah shows, reproaching Jerusalem, "Thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed;" speaking of her who prostituted herself to the powers which came against her to pollute her. For her lovers are the devil and his angels, who plan to defile and pollute our reasonable and clear-sighted beauty of mind by intercourse with themselves, and desire to cohabit with every soul which is betrothed to the Lord.

CHAPTER II.-THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

If, then, any one will keep this beauty inviolate and unharmed, and such as He who constructed it formed and fashioned it, imitating the eternal and intelligible nature of which man is the representation and likeness, and will become like a glorious and holy image, he will be transferred thence to heaven, the city of the blessed, and will dwell there as in a sanctuary. Now our beauty is then best preserved undefiled and perfect when, protected by virginity, it is not darkened by the heat of corruption from without; but, remaining in itself, it is adorned with righteousness, being brought as a bride to the Son of God; as He also Himself suggests, exhorting that the light of chastity should be kindled in their flesh, as in lamps; since the number of the ten virgins signifies the souls that have believed in Jesus Christ, symbolizing by the ten the only right way to heaven. Now five of them were prudent and wise; and five were foolish and unwise, for they had not the forethought to fill their vessels with oil, remaining destitute of righteousness. Now by these He signifies those who strive to come to the boundaries of virginity, and who strain every nerve to fulfil this love, acting virtuously and temperately, and who profess and boast that this is their aim; but who, making light of it, and being subdued by the changes of the world, come rather to be sketches of the shadowy image of virtue, than workers who represent the living truth itself.

CHAPTER III.-THE SAME ENDEAVOUR AND EFFORT AFTER VIRGINITY,
WITH A DIFFERENT RESULT.

1 Now when it is said that "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom," this means that the same way towards the goal had been entered upon, as is shown by the mark X. By profession they had equally proposed the same end, and therefore they are called ten, since, as I have said, they chose the same profession; but they did not, for all that, go forth in the same way to meet

the bridegroom. For some provided abundant future nourishment for their lamps which were fed with oil, but others were careless, thinking only of the present. And, therefore, they are divided into two equal numbers of five, inasmuch as the one class preserved the five senses, which most people consider the gates of wisdom, pure and undefiled by sins; but the others, on the contrary, corrupted them by multitudes of sins, defiling themselves with evil. For having restrained them, and kept them free from righteousness, they bore a more abundant crop of transgressions, in consequence of which it came to pass that they were forbidden, and shut out from the divine courts. For whether, on the one hand, we do right, or, on the other, do wrong through these senses, our habits of good and evil are confirmed. And as Thallousa said that there is a chastity of the eyes, and of the ears, and of the tongue, and so on of the other senses;

2 so here she who keeps inviolate the faith of the five pathways of virtue—sight, taste, smell, touch, and hearing—is called by the name of the five virgins, because she has kept the five forms of the sense pure to Christ, as a lamp, causing the light of holiness to shine forth clearly from each of them. For the flesh is truly, as it were, our five-lighted lamp, which the soul will bear like a torch, when it stands before Christ the Bridegroom, on the day of the resurrection, showing her faith springing out clear and bright through all the senses, as He Himself taught, saying, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?" meaning by the earth our bodies, in which He wished the swift-moving and fiery operation of His doctrine to be kindled. Now the oil represents wisdom and righteousness; for while the soul rains down unsparingly, and pours forth these things upon the body, the light of virtue is kindled unquenchably, making its good actions to shine before men, so that our Father which is in heaven may be glorified.

CHAPTER IV.—WHAT THE OIL IN THE LAMPS MEANS.

1 Now they offered, in Leviticus, oil of this kind, "pure oil olive, beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually, without the veil ... before the Lord." But they were commanded to have a feeble light from the evening to the morning. For their light seemed to resemble the prophetic word, which gives encouragement to temperance, being nourished by the acts and the faith of the people. But the temple (in which the light was kept burning) refers to "the lot of their inheritance," inasmuch as a light can shine in only one house. Therefore it was necessary that it should be lighted before day.

For he says, "they shall burn it until the morning," that is, until the coming of Christ. But the Sun of chastity and of righteousness having arisen, there is no need of other light. ² So long, then, as this people treasured up nourishment for the light, supplying oil by their works, the light of continence was not extinguished among them, but was ever shining and giving light in the "lot of their inheritance." But when the oil failed, by their turning away from the faith to incontinence, the light was entirely extinguished, so that the virgins have again to kindle their lamps by light transmitted from one to another, bringing the light of incorruption to the world from above. Let us then supply now the oil of good works abundantly, and of prudence, being purged from all corruption which would weigh us down; lest, while the Bridegroom tarries, our lamps may also in like manner be extinguished. For the delay is the interval which precedes the appearing of Christ. Now the slumbering and sleeping of the virgins signifies the departure from life; and the midnight is the kingdom of Antichrist, during which the destroying angel passes over the houses. But the cry which was made when it was said, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," is the voice which shall be heard from heaven, and the trumpet, when the saints, all their bodies being raised, shall be caught up, and shall go on the clouds to meet the Lord.

³ For it is to be observed that the word of God says, that after the cry all the virgins arose, that is, that the dead shall be raised after the voice which comes from heaven, as also Paul intimates, that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; "that is the tabernacles, for they died, being put off by their souls. "Then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them," meaning our souls. For we truly who are alive are the souls which, with the bodies, having put them on again, shall go to meet Him in the clouds, bearing our lamps trimmed, not with anything alien and worldly, but like stars radiating the light of prudence and continence, full of ethereal splendour.

CHAPTER V.-THE REWARD OF VIRGINITY.

¹ These, O fair virgins, are the orgies of our mysteries; these the mystic rites of those who are initiated in virginity; these the "undefiled rewards" of the conflict of virginity. I am betrothed to the Word, and receive as a reward the eternal crown of immortality and riches from the Father; and I triumph in

eternity, crowned with the bright and unfading flowers of wisdom. I am one in the choir with Christ dispensing His rewards in heaven, around the unbeginning and never-ending King. I have become the torch-bearer of the unapproachable lights, and I join with their company in the new song of the archangels, showing forth the new grace of the Church; for the Word says that the company of virgins always follow the Lord, and have fellowship with Him wherever He is. And this is what John signifies in the commemoration of the hundred and forty-four thousand.

2 Go then, ye virgin band of the new ages. Go, fill your vessels with righteousness, for the hour is coming when ye must rise and meet the bridegroom. Go, lightly leaving on one side the fascinations and the pleasures of life, which confuse and bewitch the soul; and thus shall ye attain the promises, "This I swear by Him who has shown me the way of life." This crown, woven by the prophets, I have taken from the prophetic meadows, and offer to thee, O Arete. Agathe having thus admirably brought her discourse to an end, she said, and having been applauded for what she had uttered, Arete again commanded Procilla to speak. And she, rising and passing before the entrance, spoke thus.

The Banquet, Discourse 7: Procilla

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.—WHAT THE TRUE AND SEEMLY MANNER OF PRAISING; THE FATHER GREATER THAN THE SON, NOT IN SUBSTANCE, BUT IN ORDER; VIRGINITY THE LILY; FAITHFUL SOULS AND VIRGINS, THE ONE BRIDE OF THE ONE CHRIST.

¹It is not lawful for me to delay, O Arete, after such discourses, seeing that I confide undoubtingly in the manifold wisdom of God, which gives richly and widely to whomsoever it wills. For sailors who have experience of the sea declare that the same wind blows on all who sail; and that different persons, managing their course differently, strive to reach different ports. Some have a fair wind; to others it blows across their course; and yet both easily accomplish their voyage. Now, in the same way, the "understanding Spirit, holy, one only," gently breathing down from the treasures of the Father above, giving us all the clear fair wind of knowledge, will suffice to guide the course of our words without offence. And now it is time for me to speak. This, O virgins, is the one true and seemly mode of praising, when he who praises brings forward a witness better than all those who are praised. For thence one may learn with certainty that the commendation is given not from favour, nor of necessity, nor from repute, but in accordance with truth and an unflattering judgment. And so the prophets and apostles, who spoke more fully concerning the Son of God, and assigned to Him a divinity above other men, did not refer their praises of Him to the teaching of angels, but to Him upon whom all authority and power depend.

²For it was fitting that He who was greater than all things after the Father, should have the Father, who alone is greater than Himself, as His witness. And so I will not bring forward the praises of virginity from mere human report, but from Him who cares for us, and who has taken up the whole mat-

ter, showing that He is the husbandman of this grace, and a lover of its beauty, and a fitting witness. And this is quite clear, in the Song of Songs, to any one who is willing to see it, where Christ Himself, praising those who are firmly established in virginity, says, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters; "comparing the grace of chastity to the lily, on account of its purity and fragrance, and sweetness and joyousness. For chastity is like a spring flower, always softly exhaling immortality from its white petals. Therefore He is not ashamed to confess that He loves the beauty of its prime, in the following words: "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse;

3 a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." 4 These praises does Christ proclaim to those who have come to the boundaries of virginity, describing them all under the one name of His spouse; for the spouse must be betrothed to the Bridegroom, and called by His name. And, moreover, she must be undefiled and unpolluted, as a garden sealed, in which all the odours of the fragrance of heaven are grown, that Christ alone may come and gather them, blooming with incorporeal seeds. For the Word loves none of the things of the flesh, because He is not of such a nature as to be contented with any of the things which are corruptible, as hands, or face, or feet; but He looks upon and delights in the beauty which is immaterial and spiritual, not touching the beauty of the body.

CHAPTER II.-THE INTERPRETATION OF THAT PASSAGE OF THE
CANTICLES.

Consider now, O virgins, that, in saying to the bride, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse," He shows the clear eye of the understanding, when the inner man has cleansed it and looks more clearly upon the truth. For it is clear to every one that there is a twofold power of sight, the one of the soul, and the other of the body. But the Word does not profess a love for that of the body, but only that of the understanding, saying, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck; "which means, By the most lovely sight of thy mind, thou hast urged my heart to

love, radiating forth from within the glorious beauty of chastity. Now the chains of the neck are necklaces which are composed of various precious stones; and the souls which take care of the body, place around the outward neck of the flesh this visible ornament to deceive those who behold; but those who live chastely, on the other hand, adorn themselves within with ornaments truly composed of various precious stones, namely, of freedom, of magnanimity, of wisdom, and of love, caring little for those temporal decorations which, like leaves blossoming for an hour, dry up with the changes of the body. For there is seen in man a twofold beauty, of which the Lord accepts that which is within and is immortal, saying, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one chain of thy neck;" meaning to show that He had been drawn to love by the splendour of the inner man shining forth in its glory, even as the Psalmist also testifies, saying, "The King's daughter is all glorious within."

CHAPTER III.-VIRGINS BEING MARTYRS FIRST AMONG THE
COMPANIONS OF CHRIST.

¹ Let no one suppose that all the remaining company of those who have believed are condemned, thinking that we who are virgins alone shall be led on to attain the promises, not understanding that there shall be tribes and families and orders, according to the analogy of the faith of each. And this Paul, too, sets forth, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. And the Lord does not profess to give the same honours to all; but to some He promises that they shall be numbered in the kingdom of heaven, to others the inheritance of the earth, and to others to see the Father. And here, also, He announces that the order and holy choir of the virgins shall first enter in company with Him into the rest of the new dispensation, as into a bridal chamber. For they were martyrs, not as bearing the pains of the body for a little moment of time, but as enduring them through all their life, not shrinking from truly wrestling in an Olympian contest for the prize of chastity; but resisting the fierce torments of pleasures and fears and griefs, and the other evils of the iniquity of men, they first of all carry off the prize, taking their place in the higher rank of those who receive the promise.

² Undoubtedly these are the souls whom the Word calls alone His chosen spouse and His sister, but the rest concubines and virgins and daughters,

speaking thus: "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: the daughters saw her and blessed her: yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. For there being plainly many daughters of the Church, one alone is the chosen and most precious in her eyes above all, namely, the order of virgins.

3 Chapter IV.-The Passage Explained; The Queens, the Holy Souls Before the Deluge; The Concubines, the Souls of the Prophets; The Divine Seed for Spiritual Offspring in the Books of the Prophets; The Nuptials of the Word in the Prophets as Though Clandestine. Now if any one should have a doubt about these things, inasmuch as the points are nowhere fully wrought out, and should still wish more fully to perceive their spiritual significance, namely, what the queens and the concubines and the virgins are, we will say that these may have been spoken concerning those who have been conspicuous for their righteousness from the beginning throughout the progress of time; as of those before the flood, and those after the flood, and so on of those after Christ. The Church, then, is the spouse. The queens are those royal souls before the deluge, who became well-pleasing to God, that is, those about Abel and Seth and Enoch. The concubines those after the flood, namely, those of the prophets, in whom, before the Church was betrothed to the Lord, being united to them after the manner of concubines, He sowed true words in an incorrupt and pure philosophy, so that, conceiving faith, they might bring forth to Him the Spirit of salvation. For such fruits do the souls bring forth with whom Christ has had intercourse, fruits which bear an ever-memorable renown. For if you will look at the books of Moses, or David, or Solomon, or Isaiah, or of the prophets who follow, O virgins, you will see what offspring they have left, for the saving of life, from their intercourse with the Son of God. Hence the Word has with deep perception called the souls of the prophets concubines, because He did not espouse them openly, as He did the Church, having killed for her the fatted calf.

CHAPTER V.-THE SIXTY QUEENS: WHY SIXTY, AND WHY QUEENS; THE
EXCELLENCE OF THE SAINTS OF THE FIRST AGE.

In addition to these matters, there is this also to be considered, so that nothing may escape us of things which are necessary, why He said that the queens were sixty, and the concubines eighty, and the virgins so numerous as not to be counted from their multitude, but the spouse one. And first let us speak of

the sixty. I imagine that He named under the sixty queens, those who had pleased God from the first-made man in succession to Noah, for this reason, since these had no need of precepts and laws for their salvation, the creation of the world in six days being still recent. For they remembered that in six days God formed the creation, and those things which were made in paradise; and how man, receiving a command not to touch the tree of knowledge, ran aground, the author of evil having led him astray. Thence he gave the symbolical name of sixty queens to those souls who, from the creation of the world, in succession chose God as the object of their love, and were almost, so to speak, the offspring of the first age, and neighbours of the great six days' work, from their having been born, as I said, immediately after the six days. For these had great honour, being associated with the angels, and often seeing God manifested visibly, and not in a dream. For consider what confidence Seth had towards God, and Abel, and Enos, and Enoch, and Methuselah, and Noah, the first lovers of righteousness, and the first of the first-born children who are written in heaven, being thought worthy of the kingdom, as a kind of first-fruits of the plants for salvation, coming out as early fruit to God. And so much may suffice concerning these.

CHAPTER VI.—THE EIGHTY CONCUBINES, WHAT; THE KNOWLEDGE OF
THE INCARNATION COMMUNICATED TO THE PROPHETS.

It still remains to speak concerning the concubines. To those who lived after the deluge the knowledge of God was henceforth more remote, and they needed other instruction to ward off the evil, and to be their helper, since idolatry was already creeping in. Therefore God, that the race of man might not be wholly destroyed, through forgetfulness of the things which were good, commanded His own Son to reveal to the prophets His own future appearance in the world by the flesh, in which the joy and knowledge of the spiritual eighth day shall be proclaimed, which would bring the remission of sins and the resurrection, and that thereby the passions and corruptions of men would be circumcised. And, therefore, He called by the name of the eighty virgins the list of the prophets from Abraham, on account of the dignity of circumcision, which embraces the number eight, in accordance with which also the law is framed; because they first, before the Church was espoused to the Word, received the divine seed, and foretold the circumcision of the spiritual eighth day.

CHAPTER VII.-THE VIRGINS, THE RIGHTEOUS ANCIENTS; THE CHURCH,
THE ONE ONLY SPOUSE, MORE EXCELLENT THAN THE OTHERS.

Now he calls by the name of virgins, who belong to a countless assembly, those who, being inferior to the better ones, have practised righteousness, and have striven against sin with youthful and noble energy. But of these, neither the queens, nor the concubines, nor the virgins, are compared to the Church. For she is reckoned the perfect and chosen one beyond all these, consisting and composed of all the apostles, the Bride who surpasses all in the beauty of youth and virginity. Therefore, also, she is blessed and praised by all, because she saw and heard freely what those desired to see, even for a little time, and saw not, and to hear, but heard not. For "blessed," said our Lord to His disciples, "are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." For this reason, then, the prophets count them blessed, and admire them, because the Church was thought worthy to participate in those things which they did not attain to hear or see. For "there are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is but one."

CHAPTER VIII.-THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST HIS ONE DOVE.

Can any one now say otherwise than that the Bride is the undefiled flesh of the Lord, for the sake of which He left the Father and came down here, and was joined to it, and, being incarnate, dwelt in it? Therefore He called it figuratively a dove, because that creature is tame and domestic, and readily adapts itself to man's mode of life. For she alone, so to speak, was found spotless and undefiled, and excelling all in the glory and beauty of righteousness, so that none of those who had pleased God most perfectly could stand near to her in a comparison of virtue. And for this reason she was thought worthy to become a partaker of the kingdom of the Only-begotten, being betrothed and united to Him. And in the forty-fourth psalm, the queen who, chosen out of many, stands at the right hand of God, clothed in the golden ornament of virtue, whose beauty the King desired, is, as I said, the undefiled and blessed flesh, which the Word Himself carried into the heavens, and presented at the right hand of God, "wrought about with divers colours," that is, in the pursuits of immortality, which he calls symbolically golden fringes. For since this garment is variegated and woven of various virtues, as chastity,

prudence, faith, love, patience, and other good things, which, covering, as they do, the unseemliness of the flesh, adorn man with a golden ornament.

CHAPTER IX.—THE VIRGINS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE QUEEN AND SPOUSE.

¹ Moreover, we must further consider what the Spirit delivers to us in the rest of the psalm, after the enthronization of the manhood assumed by the Word at the right hand of the Father. "The virgins," He says, "that be her fellows shall bear her company, and shall be brought unto thee. With joy and gladness shall they be brought, and shall enter into the King's palace." Now, here the Spirit seems quite plainly to praise virginity, next, as we have explained, to the Bride of the Lord, who promises that the virgins shall approach second to the Almighty with joy and gladness, guarded and escorted by angels. For so lovely and desirable is in truth the glory of virginity, that, next to the Queen, whom the Lord exalts, and presents in sinless glory to the Father, the choir and order of virgins bear her company, assigned to a place second to that of the Bride. Let these efforts of mine to speak to thee, O Arete, concerning chastity, be engraven on a monument.

² And Procilla having thus spoken, Thekla said, It is my turn after her to continue the contest; and I rejoice, since I too have the favouring wisdom of words, perceiving that I am, like a harp, inwardly attuned, and prepared to speak with elegance and propriety. Arete. I most willingly hail thy readiness, O Thekla, in which I confide to give me fitting discourse, in accordance with thy powers; since thou wilt yield to none in universal philosophy and instruction, instructed by Paul in what is fitting to say of evangelical and divine doctrine.

The Banquet, Discourse 8: Thekla

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.—METHODIUS' DERIVATION OF THE WORD VIRGINITY:
WHOLLY DIVINE; VIRTUE, IN GREEK *Ἀρετή*/, WHENCE SO CALLED.

Well, then, let us first say, beginning from the origin of the name, for what cause this supreme and blessed pursuit was called *parqeni/a*, what it aims at, what power it has, and afterwards, what fruits it gives forth. For almost all have been ignorant of this virtue as being superior to ten thousand other advantages of virtue which we cultivate for the purification and adornment of the soul. For virginity is divine by the change of one letter, as she alone makes him who has her, and is initiated by her incorruptible rites like unto God, than which it is impossible to find a greater good, removed, as it is, from pleasure and grief; and the wing of the soul sprinkled by it becomes stronger and lighter, accustomed daily to fly from human desires. For since the children of the wise have said that our life is a festival, and that we have come to exhibit in the theatre the drama of truth, that is, righteousness, the devil and the demons plotting and striving against us, it is necessary for us to look upwards and to take our flight aloft, and to flee from the blandishments of their tongues, and from their forms tinged with the outward appearance of temperance, more than from the Sirens of Homer. For many, bewitched by the pleasures of error, take their flight downwards, and are weighed down when they come into this life, their nerves being relaxed and unstrung, by means of which the power of the wings of temperance is strengthened, lightening the downward tendency of the corruption of the body. Whence, O Arete, whether thou hast thy name, signifying, virtue, because thou art worthy of being chosen for thyself, or because thou raisest and liftest up to heaven, ever going in the purest minds, come, give me thy help in my discourse, which thou hast thyself appointed me to speak.

CHAPTER II.-THE LOFTY MIND AND CONSTANCY OF THE SACRED
VIRGINS; THE INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINS INTO THE BLESSED ABODES
BEFORE OTHERS.

1 Those who take a downward flight, and fall into pleasures, do not desist from grief and labours until, through their passionate desires, they fulfil the want of their intemperance, and, being degraded and shut out from the sanctuary, they are removed from the scene of truth, and, instead of procreating children with modesty and temperance, they rave in the wild pleasures of unlawful amours. But those who, on light wing, ascend into the supra-mundane life, and see from afar what other men do not see, the very pastures of immortality, bearing in abundance flowers of inconceivable beauty, are ever turning themselves again to the spectacles there; and, for this reason, those things are thought small which are here considered noble-such as wealth, and glory, and birth, and marriage; and they think no more of those things. But yet if any of them should choose to give up their bodies to wild beasts or to fire, and be punished, they are ready to have no care for pains, for the desire of them or the fear of them; so that they seem, while in the world, not to be in the world, but to have already reached, in thought and in the tendency of their desires, the assembly of those who are in heaven.

2 Now it is not right that the wing of virginity should, by its own nature, be weighed down upon the earth, but that it should soar upwards to heaven, to a pure atmosphere, and to the life which is akin to that of angels. Whence also they, first of all, after their call and departure hence, who have rightly and faithfully contended as virgins for Christ, bear away the prize of victory, being crowned by Him with the flowers of immortality. For, as soon as their souls have left the world, it is said that the angels meet them with much rejoicing, and conduct them to the very pastures already spoken of, to which also they were longing to come, contemplating them in imagination from afar, when, while they were yet dwelling in their bodies, they appeared to them divine.

CHAPTER III.-THE LOT AND INHERITANCE OF VIRGINITY.

1 Furthermore, when they have come hither, they see wonderful and glorious and blessed things of beauty, and such as cannot be spoken to men. They see there righteousness itself and prudence, and love itself, and truth and temperance, and other flowers and plants of wisdom, equally splendid, of which we here behold only the shadows and apparitions, as in dreams, and

think that they consist of the actions of men, because there is no clear image of them here, but only dim copies, which themselves we see often when making dark copies of them. For never has any one seen with his eyes the greatness or the form or the beauty of righteousness itself, or of understanding, or of peace; but there, in Him whose name is I AM, they are seen perfect and clear, as they are. For there is a tree of temperance itself, and of love, and of understanding, as there are plants of the fruits which grow here-as of grapes, the pomegranate, and of apples; and so, too, the fruits of those trees are gathered and eaten, and do not perish and wither, but those who gather them grow to immortality and a likeness to God. Just as he from whom all are descended, before the fall and the blinding of his eyes, being in paradise, enjoyed its fruits, God appointing man to dress and to keep the plants of wisdom. For it was entrusted to the first Adam to cultivate those fruits.

2 Now Jeremiah saw that these things exist specially in a certain place, removed to a great distance from our world, where, compassionating those who have fallen from that good state, he says: "Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding; that thou mayest know also where is length of days, and life, where is the light of the eyes, and peace. Who hath found out her place? or who hath come into her treasures?" The virgins having entered into the treasures of these things, gather the reasonable fruits of the virtues, sprinkled with manifold and well-ordered lights, which, like a fountain, God throws up over them, irradiating that state with unquenchable lights. And they sing harmoniously, giving glory to God. For a pure atmosphere is shed over them, and one which is not oppressed by the sun.

CHAPTER IV.-EXHORTATION TO THE CULTIVATION OF VIRGINITY; A
PASSAGE FROM THE APOCALYPSE IS PROPOSED TO BE EXAMINED.

1 Now, then, O Virgins, daughters of undefiled temperance, let us strive for a life of blessedness and the kingdom of heaven. And do ye unite with those before you in an earnest desire for the same glory of chastity, caring little for the things of this life. For immortality and chastity do not contribute a little to happiness, raising up the flesh aloft, and drying up its moisture and its clay-like weight, by a greater force of attraction. And let not the uncleanness which you hear creep in and weigh you down to the earth; nor let sorrow transform your joy, melting away your hopes in better things; but shake off incessantly the calamities which come upon you, not defiling your mind with lamentations. Let faith conquer wholly, and let its light drive away the

visions of evil which crowd around the heart. For, as when the moon brightly shining fills the heaven with its light, and all the air becomes clear, but suddenly the clouds from the west, enviously rushing in, for a little while overshadow its light, but do not destroy it, since they are immediately driven away by a blast of the wind; so ye also, when causing the light of chastity to shine in the world, although pressed upon by afflictions and labours, do not grow weary and abandon your hopes. For the clouds which come from the Evil One are driven away by the Spirit, if ye, like your Mother, who gives birth to the male Virgin in heaven, fear nothing the serpent that lies in wait and plots against you; concerning whom I intend to discourse to you more plainly; for it is now time.

²John, in the course of the Apocalypse, says: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." So far we have given, in brief, the history of the woman and the dragon. But to search out and explain the solution of them is beyond my powers. Nevertheless, let me venture, trusting in Him who commanded to search the Scriptures. If, then, you agree with this, it will not be difficult to undertake it; for you will quite pardon me, if I am unable sufficiently to explain the exact meaning of the Scripture.

CHAPTER V.-THE WOMAN WHO BRINGS FORTH, TO WHOM THE DRAGON IS OPPOSED, THE CHURCH; HER ADORNMENT AND GRACE.

¹The woman who appeared in heaven clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, and having the moon for her footstool, and being with child, and travailing in birth, is certainly, according to the accurate interpretation, our mother, O virgins, being a power by herself distinct from her children; whom the prophets, according to the aspect of their subjects, have

called sometimes Jerusalem, sometimes a Bride, sometimes Mount Zion, and sometimes the Temple and Tabernacle of God. For she is the power which is desired to give light in the prophet, the Spirit crying to her: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. It is the Church whose children shall come to her with all speed after the resurrection, running to her from all quarters. She rejoices receiving the light which never goes down, and clothed with the brightness of the Word as with a robe.

2 For with what other more precious or honourable ornament was it becoming that the queen should be adorned, to be led as a Bride to the Lord, when she had received a garment of light, and therefore was called by the Father? Come, then, let us go forward in our discourse, and look upon this marvelous woman as upon virgins prepared for a marriage, pure and undefiled, perfect and radiating a permanent beauty, wanting nothing of the brightness of light; and instead of a dress, clothed with light itself; and instead of precious stones, her head adorned with shining stars. For instead of the clothing which we have, she had light; and for gold and brilliant stones, she had stars; but stars not such as those which are set in the invisible heaven, but better and more resplendent, so that those may rather be considered as their images and likenesses.

CHAPTER VI.-THE WORKS OF THE CHURCH, THE BRINGING FORTH OF
CHILDREN IN BAPTISM; THE MOON IN BAPTISM, THE FULL MOON OF
CHRIST'S PASSION.

Now the statement that she stands upon the moon, as I consider, denotes the faith of those who are cleansed from corruption in the laver of regeneration, because the light of the moon has more resemblance to tepid water, and all moist substance is dependent upon her. The Church, then, stands upon our faith and adoption, under the figure of the moon, until the fulness of the nations come in, labouring and bringing forth natural men as spiritual men; for which reason too she is a mother. For just as a woman receiving tim unformed seed of a man, within a certain time brings forth a perfect man, in

the same way, one should say, does the Church conceive those who flee to the Word, and, forming them according to the likeness and form of Christ, after a certain time produce them as citizens of that blessed state. Whence it is necessary that she should stand upon the laver, bringing forth those who are washed in it. And in this way the power which she has in connection with the laver is called the moon, because the regenerate shine being renewed with a new ray, that is, a new light. Whence, also, they are by a descriptive term called newly-enlightened; the moon ever showing forth anew to them the spiritual full moon, namely, the period and the memorial of the passion, until the glory and the perfect light of the great day arise.

CHAPTER VII.-THE CHILD OF THE WOMAN IN THE APOCALYPSE NOT CHRIST, BUT THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE BORN IN THE LAVER.

If any one, for there is no difficulty in speaking distinctly, should be vexed, and reply to what we have said: "But how, O virgins, can this explanation seem to you to be according to the mind of Scripture, when the Apocalypse plainly defines that the Church brings forth a male, while you teach that her labour-pains have their fulfilment in those who are washed in the laver?" We will answer, But, O faultfinder, not even to you will it be possible to show that Christ Himself is the one who is born. For long before the Apocalypse, the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word was fulfilled. And John speaks concerning things present and things to come. But Christ, long ago conceived, was not caught up to the throne of God when He was brought forth, from fear of the serpent injuring Him. But for this was He begotten, and Himself came down from the throne of the Father, that He should remain and subdue the dragon who made an assault upon the flesh. So that you also must confess that the Church labours and gives birth to those who are baptized. As the spirit says somewhere in Isaiah: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." From whom did he flee? Surely from the dragon, that the spiritual Zion might bear a masculine people, who should come back from the passions and weakness of women to the unity of the Lord, and grow strong in manly virtue.

CHAPTER VIII.-THE FAITHFUL IN BAPTISM MALES, CONFIGURED TO
CHRIST; THE SAINTS THEMSELVES CHRISTS.

Let us then go over the ground again from the beginning, until we come in course to the end, explaining what we have said. Consider if the passage seems to you to be explained to your mind. For I think that the Church is here said to give birth to a male; since the enlightened receive the features, and the image, and the manliness of Christ, the likeness of the form of the Word being stamped upon them, and begotten in them by a true knowledge and faith, so that in each one Christ is spiritually born. And, therefore, the Church swells and travails in birth until Christ is formed in us, so that each of the saints, by partaking of Christ, has been born a Christ. According to which meaning it is said in a certain scripture, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," as though those who were baptized into Christ had been made Christs by communication of the Spirit, the Church contributing here their clearness and transformation into the image of the Word. And Paul confirms this, teaching it plainly, where he says: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened I with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." For it is necessary that the word of truth should be imprinted and stamped upon the souls of the regenerate.

CHAPTER IX.-THE SON OF GOD, WHO EVER IS, IS TO-DAY BEGOTTEN IN
THE MINDS AND SENSE OF THE FAITHFUL.

Now, in perfect agreement and correspondence with what has been said, seems to be this which was spoken by the Father from above to Christ when He came to be baptized in the water of the Jordan, "Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee;" for it is to be remarked that He was declared to be His Son unconditionally, and without regard to time; for He says "Thou art," and not "Thou hast become," showing that He had neither recently attained to the relation of Son, nor again, having begun before, after this had an end, but having been previously begotten, that He was to be, and was the same. But the expression, "This day have I begotten thee," signifies that He willed that He who existed before the ages in heaven should be begotten on the earth-that is, that He who was before unknown should be made known. Now, certainly, Christ has never yet been born in those men who have never

perceived the manifold wisdom of God—that is, has never been known, has never been manifested, has never appeared to them. But if these also should perceive the mystery of grace, then in them too, when they were converted and believed, He would be born in knowledge and understanding. Therefore from hence the Church is fitly said to form and beget the male Word in those who are cleansed. So far I have spoken according to my ability concerning the travail of the Church; and here we must change to the subject of the dragon and the other matters. Let us endeavour, then, to explain it in some measure, not deterred by the greatness of the obscurity of the Scripture; and if anything difficult comes to be considered, I will again help you to cross it like a river.

CHAPTER X.—THE DRAGON, THE DEVIL; THE STARS STRUCK FROM
HEAVEN BY THE TAIL OF THE DRAGON, HERETICS; THE NUMBERS OF
THE TRINITY, THAT IS, THE PERSONS NUMBERED; ERRORS
CONCERNING THEM.

¹ The dragon, which is great, and red, and cunning, and manifold, and seven-headed, and horned, and draws down the third part of the stars, and stands ready to devour the child of the woman who is travailing, is the devil, who lies in wait to destroy the Christ-accepted mind of the baptized, and the image and clear features of the Word which had been brought forth in them. But he misses and fails of his prey, the regenerate being caught up on high to the throne of God—that is, the mind of those who are renovated is lifted up around the divine seat and the basis of truth against which there is no stumbling, being taught to look upon and regard the things which are there, so that it may not be deceived by the dragon weighing them down. For it is not allowed to him to destroy those whose thoughts and looks are upwards. And the stars, which the dragon touched with the end of his tail, and drew them down to earth, are the bodies of heresies; for we must say that the stars, which are dark, obscure, and falling, are the assemblies of the herodox; since they, too, wish to be acquainted with the heavenly ones, and to have believed in Christ, and to have the seat of their soul in heaven, and to come near to the stars as children of light.

² But they are dragged down, being shaken out by the folds of the dragon, because they did not remain within the triangular forms of godliness, falling away from it with respect to an orthodox service. Whence also they are called the third part of the stars, as having gone astray with regard

to one of the three Persons of the Trinity. As when they say, like Sabellios, that the Almighty Person of the Father Himself suffered; or as when they say, like Artemas, that the Person of the Son was born and manifested only in appearance; or when they contend, like the Ebionites, that the prophets spoke of the Person of the Spirit, of their own motion. For of Marcion and Valentinus, and those about Elkesaios and others, it is better not even to make mention. ³ Chapter XI.-The Woman with the Male Child in the Wilderness the Church; The Wilderness Belongs to Virgins and Saints; The Perfection of Numbers and Mysteries; The Equality and Perfection of the Number Six; The Number Six Related to Christ; From This Number, Too, the Creation and Harmony of the World Completed.

⁴ Now she who brings forth, and has brought forth, the masculine Word in the hearts of the faithful, and who passed, undefiled and uninjured by the wrath of the beast, into the wilderness, is, as we have explained, our mother the Church. And the wilderness into which she comes, and is nourished for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is truly waste and unfruitful of evils, and barren of corruption, and difficult of access and of transit to the multitude; but fruitful and abounding in pasture, and blooming and easy of access to the holy, and full of wisdom, and productive of life, is this most lovely, and beautifully wooded and well-watered abode of Arete. Here the south wind awakes, and the north wind blows, and the spices flow out, and all things are filled with refreshing dews, and crowned with the unfading plants of immortal life; in which we now gather flowers, and weave with sacred fingers the purple and glorious crown of virginity for the queen. For the Bride of the Word is adorned with the fruits of virtue.

⁵ And the thousand two hundred and sixty days that we are staying here, O virgins, is the accurate and perfect understanding concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, in which our mother increases, and rejoices, and exults throughout this time, until the restitution of the new dispensation, when, coming into the assembly in the heavens, she will no longer contemplate the I AM through the means of human knowledge, but will clearly behold entering in together with Christ. For a thousand, consisting of a hundred multiplied by ten, embraces a full and perfect number, and is a symbol of the Father Himself, who made the universe by Himself, and rules all things for Himself. Two hundred embraces two perfect numbers united together, and is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, since He is the Author of our

knowledge of the Son and the Father. But sixty has the number six multiplied by ten, and is a symbol of Christ, because the number six proceeding from unity is composed of its proper parts, so that nothing in it is wanting or redundant, and is complete when resolved into its parts. Thus it is necessary that the number six, when it is divided into even parts by even parts, should again make up the same quantity from its separated segment. For, first, if divided equally, it makes three; then, if divided into three parts, it makes two; and again, if divided by six, it makes one, and is again collected into itself.

6 For when divided into twice three, and three times two, and six times one, when the three and the two and the one are put together, they complete the six again. But everything is of necessity perfect which neither needs anything else in order to its completion, nor has anything over. Of the other numbers, some are more than perfect, as twelve. For the half of it is six, and the third four, and the fourth three, and the sixth two, and the twelfth one. The numbers into which it can be divided, when put together, exceed twelve, this number not having preserved itself equal to its parts, like the number six. And those which are imperfect, are numbers like eight. For the half of it is four, and the fourth two, and the eighth one. Now the numbers into which it is divided, when put together, make seven, and one is wanting to its completion, not being in all points harmonious with itself, like six, which has reference to the Son of God, who came from the fulness of the Godhead into a human life. For having emptied Himself, and taken upon Him the form of a slave, He was restored again to His former perfection and dignity. For He being humbled, and apparently degraded, was restored again from His humiliation and degradation to His former completeness and greatness, having never been diminished from His essential perfection.

7 Moreover, it is evident that the creation of the world was accomplished in harmony with this number, God having made heaven and earth, and the things which are in them, in six days; the word of creative power containing the number six, in accordance with which the Trinity is the maker of bodies. For length, and breadth, and depth make up a body. And the number six is composed of triangles. On these subjects, however, there is not sufficient time at present to enlarge with accuracy, for fear of letting the main subject slip, in considering that which is secondary.

CHAPTER XII.-VIRGINS ARE CALLED TO THE IMITATION OF THE
CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS OVERCOMING THE DRAGON.

¹ The Church, then, coming hither into this wilderness, a place unproductive of evils, is nourished, flying on the heavenward wings of virginity, which the Word called the "wings of great eagle," having conquered the serpent, and driven away from her full moon the wintry clouds. It is for the sake of these things, meanwhile, that all these discourses are held, teaching us, O fair virgins, to imitate according to our strength our mother, and not to be troubled by the pains and changes and afflictions of life, that you may enter in exulting with her into the bride-chamber, showing your lamps. Do not, therefore, lose courage on account of the schemes and slanders of the beast, but bravely prepare for the battle, armed with the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate, and the greaves. For you will bring upon him an immense consternation when you attack him with great advantage and courage; nor will he at all resist, seeing his adversaries set in array by One more powerful; but the many-headed and many-faced beast will immediately allow you to carry off the spoils of the seven contests:—"Lion in front, but dragon all behind, And in the midst a she-goat breathing forth Profuse the violence of flaming fire.

² Her slew Bellerophon in truth. And this Slew Christ the King; for many she destroyed, Nor could they bear the fetid foam which burst From out the fountain of her horrid jaws; " unless Christ had first weakened and overcome her, making her powerless and contemptible before us.

CHAPTER XIII.-THE SEVEN CROWNS OF THE BEAST TO BE TAKEN AWAY
BY VICTORIOUS CHASTITY; THE TEN CROWNS OF THE DRAGON, THE
VICES OPPOSED TO THE DECALOGUE; THE OPINION OF FATE THE
GREATEST EVIL.

¹ Therefore, taking to you a masculine and sober mind, oppose your armour to the swelling beast, and do not at all give way, nor be troubled because of his fury. For you will have immense glory if you overcome him, and take away the seven crowns which are upon him, on account of which we have to struggle and wrestle, according to our teacher Paul. For she who having first overcome the devil, and destroyed his seven heads, becomes possessed of the seven crowns of virtue, having gone through the seven great struggles of chastity. For incontinence and luxury is a head of the dragon; and whoever bruises this is wreathed with the crown of temperance. Cowardice and weak-

ness is also a head; and he who treads upon this carries off the crown of martyrdom. Unbelief and folly, and other similar fruits of wickedness, is another head; and he who has overcome these and destroyed them carries off the honours connected with them, the power of the dragon being in many ways rooted up. Moreover, the ten horns and stings which he was said to have upon his heads are the ten opposites, O virgins, to the Decalogue, by which he was accustomed to gore and cast down the souls of many imagining and contriving things in opposition to the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and to the other precepts which follow. Consider now the fiery and bitter horn of fornication, by which he casts down the incontinent;

² consider adultery, consider falsehood, covetousness, theft, and the other sister and related vices, which flourish by nature around his murderous heads, which if you root out with the aid of Christ, you will receive, as it were, divine heads, and will bloom with the crowns gained from the dragon. For it is our duty to prefer and to set forward the best things, who have received, above the earth-born, a commanding and voluntary mind, and one free from all necessity, so as to make choice like masters of the things which please us, not being in bondage to fate or fortune. And so no man would be master of himself and good, unless selecting the human example of Christ, and bringing himself to the likeness of Him, he should imitate Him in his manner of life. For of all evils the greatest which is implanted in many is that which refers the causes of sins to the motions of the stars, and says that our life is guided by the necessities of fate, as those say who study the stars, with much insolence. For they, trusting more in guessing than in prudence, that is, in something between truth and falsehood, go far astray from the sight of things as they are.

³ Whence, if you permit me, O Arete, now that I have completed the discourse which you, my mistress, appointed to be spoken, I will endeavour, with your assistance and favour, to examine carefully the position of those who are offended, and deny that we speak the truth, when we say that man is possessed of free-will, and prove that "They perish self-destroyed, By their own fault," choosing the pleasant in preference to the expedient. ⁴ Arete. I do permit you and assist you; for your discourse will be perfectly adorned when you have added this to it.

CHAPTER XIV.-THE DOCTRINE OF MATHEMATICIANS NOT WHOLLY TO BE DESPISED, WHEN THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE STARS; THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC MYTHICAL NAMES.

¹ Thekla. Resuming then, let us first lay bare, in speaking of those things according to our power, the imposture of those who boast as though they alone had comprehended from what forms the heaven is arranged, in accordance with the hypothesis of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. For they say that the circumference of the world is likened to the turnings of a well-rounded globe, the earth having a central point. For its outline being spherical, it is necessary, they say, since there are the same distances of the parts, that the earth should be the centre of the universe, around which, as being older, the heaven is whirling. For if a circumference is described from the central point, which seems to be a circle,-for it is impossible for a circle to be described without a point, and it is impossible for a circle to be without a point,-surely the earth consisted before all, they say, in a state of chaos and disorganization. Now certainly the wretched ones were overwhelmed in the chaos of error, "because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; " and their wise men said that nothing earth-born was more honourable or more ancient than the Olympians.

² Whence they are not mere children who know Christ, like the Greeks, who, burying the truth in fairies and fictions, rather than in artistic words, ascribing human calamities to the heavens, are not ashamed to describe the circumference of the world by geometrical theorems and figures, and explain that the heaven is adorned with the images of birds and of animals that live in water and on dry land, and that the qualities of the stars were made from the calamities of the men of old, so that the movements of the planets, in their opinion, depended upon the same kind of bodies. And they say that the stars revolve around the nature of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, being drawn along by the passage of the circle of the Zodiac, so that through their intermingling they see the things which happen to many, according to their conjunctions and departures, their rising and setting.

³ For the whole heaven being spherical, and having the earth for its central point, as they think, because all the straight lines from the circumference falling upon the earth are equal to one another, holds back from the circles which surround it, of which the meridian is the greatest; and the second,

which divides it into two equal parts, is the horizon; and the third, which separates these, the equinoctial; and on each side of this the two tropics, the summer and the winter-the one on the north, and the other on the south. Beyond is that which is called the axis, around which are the greater and lesser Bears, and beyond them is the tropic. And the Bears, turning about themselves, and weighing upon the axis, which passes through the poles, produce the motion of the whole world, having their heads against each other's loins, and being untouched by our horizon.

4 Then they say that the Zodiac touches all the circles, making its movements diagonally, and that there are in it a number of signs, which are called the twelve signs of the Zodiac, beginning with the Ram, and going on to the Fishes, which, they say, were so determined from mythical causes; saying that it was the Ram that conveyed Helle, the daughter of Athamas, and her brother Phryxos into Scythia; and that the head of the Ox is in honour of Zeus, who, in the form of a Bull, carried over Europe into Crete; and they say the circle called the Galaxy, or milky way, which reaches from the Fishes to the Ram, was poured forth for Herakles from the breasts of Hera, by the commands of Zeus. And thus, according to them, there was no natal destiny before Europe or Phryxos, and the Dioscuroi, and the other signs of the Zodiac, which were placed among the constellations, from men and beasts. But our ancestors lived without destiny. Let us endeavour now to crush falsehood, like physicians, taking its edge off, and quenching it with the healing medicine of words, here considering the truth.

CHAPTER XV.-ARGUMENTS FROM THE NOVELTY OF FATE AND
GENERATION; THAT GOLDEN AGE, EARLY MEN; SOLID ARGUMENTS
AGAINST THE MATHEMATICIANS.

1 If it were better, O wretched ones, that man should be subject to the star of his birth, than that he should not, why was not his generation and birth from the very time when the race of man began to be? And if it was, what is the need of those which had lately been placed among the stars, of the Lion, the Crab, the Twins, the Virgin, the Bull, the Balance, the Scorpion, the Ram, the Archer, the Fishes, the Goat, the Watercarrier, Perseus, Cassiopeia, Cepheus, Pegasus, Hydra, the Raven, the Cup, the Lyre, the Dragon, and others, from which you introduce, by your instructions, many to the knowledge of mathematics, or, rather, to a knowledge which is anathema? Well, then, either there was generation among those before, and the removal of

these creatures above was absurd; or else there was not, and God changed human life into a better state and government than that of those who before that lived an inferior life. But the ancients were better than those of the present time; whence theirs was called the golden age. There was then no natal destiny.

² If the sun, driving through the circles and passing along the signs of the Zodiac in his annual periods, accomplishes the changes and turnings of the seasons, how did those who were born before the signs of the Zodiac were placed among the stars, and the heaven was adorned with them, continue to exist, when summer, autumn, winter, and spring, were not as yet separated from each other, by means of which the body is increased and strengthened? But they did exist, and were longer lived and stronger than those who live now, since God then disposed the seasons in the same manner. The heaven was not then diversified by such shapes. If the sun and the moon and the other stars were made for the division and protection of the members of the time, and for the adornment of the heaven, and the changes of the seasons, they are divine, and better than men; for these must needs pass a better life, and a blessed and peaceful one, and one which far exceeds our own life in righteousness and virtue, observing a motion which is well-ordered and happy. But if they are the causes of the calamities and mischief of mortals, and busy themselves in working the lasciviousness, and the changes and vicissitudes of life, then they are more miserable than men, looking upon the earth, and their weak and lawless actions, and doing nothing better than men, if at least our life depends upon their revolutions and movements.

CHAPTER XVI.-SEVERAL OTHER THINGS TURNED AGAINST THE SAME
MATHEMATICIANS.

¹ If no action is performed without a previous desire, and there is no desire without a want, yet the Divine Being has no wants, and therefore has no conception of evil. And if the nature of the stars be nearer in order to that of God, being better than the virtue of the best men, then the stars also are neither productive of evil, nor in want. And besides, every one of those who are persuaded that the sun and moon and stars are divine, will allow that they are far removed from evil, and incapable of human actions which spring from the sense of pleasure and pain; for such abominable desires are unsuitable to heavenly beings. But if they are by nature exempt from these,

and in no want of anything, how should they be the causes to men of those things which they do not will themselves, and from which they are exempt?

² Now those who decide that man is not possessed of free-will, and affirm that he is governed by the unavoidable necessities of fate, and her unwritten commands, are guilty of impiety towards God Himself, making Him out to be the cause and author of human evils. For if He harmoniously orders the whole circular motion of the stars, with a wisdom which man can neither express nor comprehend, directing the course of the universe; and the stars produce the qualities of virtue and vice in human life, dragging men to these things by the chains of necessity; then they declare God to be the Cause and Giver of evils. But God is the cause of injury to no one; therefore fate is not the cause of all things. Whoever has the least intelligence will confess that God is good, righteous, wise, true, helpful, not the cause of evils, free from passion, and everything of that kind. And if the righteous be better than the unrighteous, and unrighteousness be abominable to them, God, being righteous, rejoices in righteousness, and unrighteousness is hateful to Him, being opposed and hostile to righteousness. Therefore God is not the author of unrighteousness.

³ If that which profits is altogether good, and temperance is profitable to one's house and life and friends, then temperance is good. And if temperance be in its nature good, and licentiousness be opposed to temperance, and that which is opposed to good be evil, then licentiousness is evil. And if licentiousness be in its nature evil, and out of licentiousness come adulteries, thefts, quarrels, and murders, then a licentious life is in its nature evil. But the Divine Being is not by nature implicated in evils. Therefore our birth is not the cause of these things. ⁴ If the temperate are better than the incontinent, and incontinence is abominable to them, and God rejoices in temperance, being free from the knowledge of passions, then incontinence is hateful also to God. Moreover, that the action which is in accordance with temperance, being a virtue, is better than that which is in accordance with incontinence, which is a vice, we may learn from kings and rulers, and commanders, and women, and children, and citizens, and masters, and servants, and pedagogues, and teachers; for each of these is useful to himself and to the public when he is temperate; but when he is licentious he is injurious to himself and to the public. And if there be any difference between a filthy man and a noble man, a licentious and a temperate; and if the character of the

noble and the temperate be the better, and that of the opposite the worse; and if those of the better character be near to God and His friends, and those of the worse be far from Him and His enemies, those who believe in fate make no distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness, between filthiness and nobility, between licentiousness and temperance, which is a contradiction. For if good be opposed to evil, and unrighteousness be evil, and this be opposed to righteousness and righteousness be good, and good be hostile to evil, and evil be unlike to good, then righteousness is different from un-righteousness. And therefore God is not the cause of evils, nor does He rejoice in evils. Nor does reason commend them, being good. If, then, any are evil, they are evil in accordance with the wants and desires of their minds, and not by necessity.

5 "They perish self-destroyed, By their own fault." If destiny leads one on to kill a man, and to stain his hands with murder, and the law forbids this, punishing criminals, and by threats restrains the decrees of destiny, such as committing injustice, adultery, theft, poisoning, then the law is in opposition to destiny; for those things which destiny appointed the law prohibits, and those things which the law prohibits destiny compels men to do. Hence law is hostile to destiny. But if it be hostile, then lawgivers do not act in accordance with destiny; for by passing decrees in opposition to destiny they destroy destiny. Either, then, there is destiny and there was no need of laws; or there are laws and they are not in accordance with destiny. But it is impossible that anyone should be born or anything done apart from destiny; for they say it is not lawful for anyone even to move a finger apart from fate. And therefore it was in accordance with destiny that Minos and Dracon, and Lycurgus, and Solon, and Zaleukos were law-givers and appointed laws, prohibiting adulteries, murders, violence, rape, thefts, as things which neither existed nor took place in accordance with destiny. But if these things were in accordance with destiny, then the laws were not in accordance with destiny. For destiny itself would not be destroyed by itself, cancelling itself, and contending against itself; here appointing laws forbidding adultery and murders, and taking vengeance upon and punishing the wicked, and there producing murders and adulteries. But this is impossible: for nothing is alien and abhorrent to itself, and self-destructive, and at variance with itself. And, therefore, there is no destiny.

6 If everything in the world falls out in accordance with destiny, and nothing without it, then the law must needs be produced by destiny. But the law destroys destiny, teaching that virtue should be learnt, and diligently performed; and that vice should be avoided, and that it is produced by want of discipline. Therefore there is no destiny. If destiny makes men to injure one another, and to be injured by one another, what need is there of laws? But if laws are made that they may check the sinful, God having a care for those who are injured, it were better that the evil should not act in accordance with Fate, than that they should be set right, after having acted. But God is good and wise, and does what is best. Therefore there is no fixed destiny. Either education and habit are the cause of sins, or the passions of the soul, and those desires which arise through the body. But whichever of these be the cause, God is not the cause. If it is better to be righteous than to be unrighteous, why is not man made so at once from his birth? But if afterwards he is tempered by instruction and laws, that he may become better, he is so tempered as possessing free-will, and not by nature evil. If the evil are evil in accordance with destiny, by the decrees of Providence, they are not blameworthy and deserving of the punishment which is inflicted by the laws, since they live according to their own nature, and are not capable of being changed.

7 And, again, if the good, living according to their own proper nature, are praiseworthy, their natal destiny being the cause of their goodness; yet the wicked, living according to their own proper nature, are not blamable in the eye of a righteous judge. For, if we must speak plainly, he who lives according to the nature which belongs to him, in no way sins. For he did not make himself thus, but Fate; and he lives according to its motion, being urged on by unavoidable necessity. Then no one is bad. But some men are bad: and vice is blameworthy, and hostile to God, as reason has shown. But virtue is lovable and praiseworthy, God having appointed a law for the punishment of the wicked. Therefore there is no Fate.

CHAPTER XVII.-THE LUST OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT: VICE AND
VIRTUE.

1 But why do I draw out my discourse to such length, spending the time with arguments, having set forth the things which are most necessary for persuasion, and to gain approval for that which is expedient; and having made manifest to all, by a few words, the inconsistency of their trick, so that it is

now possible even for a child to see and perceive their error; and that to do good or evil is in our own power, and not decided by the stars. For there are two motions in us, the lust of the flesh and that of the soul, differing from each other, whence they have received two names, that of virtue and that of vice. And we ought to obey the most noble and most useful leading of virtue, choosing the best in preference to the base. But enough on these points. I must come to the end of my discourse; for I fear, and am ashamed, after these discourses on chastity, that I should be obliged to introduce the opinions of men who study the heavens, or rather who study nonsense, who waste their life with mere conceits, passing it in nothing but fabulous figments. And now may these offerings of ours, composed from the words which are spoken by God, be acceptable to thee, O Arete, my mistress.

² Euboulios. How bravely and magnificently, O Gregorion, has Thekla debated! Gregorion. What, then, would you have said, if you had listened to herself, speaking fluently, and with easy expression, with much grace and pleasure? So that she was admired by every one who attended, her language blossoming with words, as she set forth intelligently, and in fact picturesquely, the subjects on which she spoke, her countenance suffused with the blush of modesty; for she is altogether brilliant in body and soul. Euboulios. Rightly do you say this, Gregorion, and none of these things is false; for I knew her wisdom also from other noble actions, and what sort of things she succeeded in speaking, giving proof of supreme love to Christ; and how glorious she often appeared in meeting the chief conflicts of the martyrs, procuring for herself a zeal equal to her courage, and a strength of body equal to the wisdom of her counsels.

³ Gregorion. Most truly do you also speak. But let us not waste time; for we shall often be able to discuss these and other subjects. But I must now first relate to you the discourses of the other virgins which followed, as I promised; and chiefly those of Tusiane and Domnina; for these still remain. When, then, Thekla ceased speaking these things, Theopatra said that Arete directed Tusiane to speak; and that she, smiling, passed before her and said.

The Banquet, Discourse 9: Tusiane

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

INTRODUCTION

¹Chapter I.-Chastity the Chief Ornament of the True Tabernacle; Seven Days Appointed to the Jews for Celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles: What They Signify; The Sum of This Septenary Uncertain; Not Clear to Any One When the Consummation of the World Will Be; Even Now the Fabric of the World Completed. O Arete, thou dearest boast to the lovers of virginity, I also implore thee to afford me thine aid, lest I should be wanting in words, the subject having been so largely and variously handled. Wherefore I ask to be excused exordium and introductions, lest, whilst I delay in embellishments suitable to them, I depart from the subject: so glorious, and honourable, and renowned a thing is virginity. ²God, when He appointed to the true Israelites the legal rite of the true feast of the tabernacles, directed, in Leviticus, how they should keep and do honour to the feast; above all things, saying that each one should adorn his tabernacle with chastity. I will add the words themselves of Scripture, from which, without any doubt, it will be shown how agreeable to God, and acceptable to Him, is this ordinance of virginity: "In the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations; ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; that your genera-

tions may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

³ Here the Jews, fluttering about the bare letter of Scripture, like drones about the leaves of herbs, but not about flowers and fruits as the bee, fully believe that these words and ordinances were spoken concerning such a tabernacle as they erect; as if God delighted in those trivial adornments which they, preparing, fabricate from trees, not perceiving the wealth of good things to come; whereas these things, being like air and phantom shadows, foretell the resurrection and the putting up of our tabernacle that had fallen upon the earth, which at length, in the seventh thousand of years, resuming again immortal, we shall celebrate the great feast of true tabernacles in the new and indissoluble creation, the fruits of the earth having been gathered in, and men no longer begetting and begotten, but God resting from the works of creation. ⁴ For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord, which signifies that, when this world shall be terminated at the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us. For now to this time all things are created by His all-sufficient will and inconceivable power; the earth still yielding its fruits, and the waters being gathered together in their receptacles; and the light still severed from darkness, and the allotted number of men not yet being complete; and the sun arising to rule the day, and the moon the night; and four-footed creatures, and beasts, and creeping things arising from the earth, and winged creatures, and creatures that swim, from the water. Then, when the appointed times shall have been accomplished, and God shall have ceased to form this creation, in the seventh month, the great resurrection-day, it is commanded that the Feast of our Tabernacles shall be celebrated to the Lord, of which the things said in Leviticus are symbols and figures, which things, carefully investigating, we should consider the naked truth itself, for He saith, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words Of the wise, and their dark sayings."

5 Wherefore let it shame the Jews that they do not perceive the deep things of the Scriptures, thinking that nothing else than outward things are contained in the law and the prophets; for they, intent upon things earthly, have in greater esteem the riches of the world than the wealth which is of the soul. For since the Scriptures are in this way divided that some of them give the likeness of past events, some of them a type of the future, the miserable men, going back, deal with the figures of the future as if they were already things of the past. As in the instance of the immolation of the Lamb, the mystery of which they regard as solely in remembrance of the deliverance of their fathers from Egypt, when, although the first-born of Egypt were smitten, they themselves were preserved by marking the door-posts of their houses with blood. Nor do they understand that by it also the death of Christ is personified, by whose blood souls made safe and sealed shall be preserved from wrath in the burning of the world; whilst the first-born, the sons of Satan, shall be destroyed with an utter destruction by the avenging angels, who shall reverence the seal of the Blood impressed upon the former.

CHAPTER II.—FIGURE, IMAGE, TRUTH: LAW GRACE, GLORY; MAN
CREATED IMMORTAL: DEATH BROUGHT IN BY DESTRUCTIVE SIN.

1 And let these things be said for the sake of example, showing that the Jews have wonderfully fallen from the hope of future good, because they consider things present to be only signs of things already accomplished; whilst they do not perceive that the figures represent images, and images are the representatives of truth. For the law is indeed the figure and the shadow of an image, that is, of the Gospel; but the image, namely, the Gospel, is the representative of truth itself. For the men of olden time and the law foretold to us the characteristics of the Church, and the Church represents those of the new dispensation which is to come. Whence we, having received Christ, saying, "I am the truth," know that shadows and figures have ceased; and we hasten on to the truth, proclaiming its glorious images. For now we know "in part," and as it were "through a glass," since that which is perfect has not yet come to us; namely, the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection, when "that which is in part shall be done away. For then will all our tabernacles be firmly set up, when again the body shall rise, with bones again joined and compacted with flesh. Then shall we celebrate truly to the Lord a glad festival-day, when we shall receive eternal tabernacles, no more to perish or be dissolved into the dust of the tomb.

2 Now, our tabernacle was at first fixed in an immoveable state, but was moved by transgression and bent to the earth, God putting an end to sin by means of death, lest man immortal, living a sinner, and sin living in him, should be liable to eternal curse. Wherefore he died, although he had not been created liable to death or corruption, and the soul was separated from the flesh, that sin might perish by death, not being able to live longer in one dead. Whence sin being dead and destroyed, again I shall rise immortal; and I praise God who by means of death frees His sons from death, and I celebrate lawfully to His honour a festal-day, adorning my tabernacle, that is my flesh, with good works, as there did the five virgins with the five-lighted lamps.

CHAPTER III.-HOW EACH ONE OUGHT TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR THE
FUTURE RESURRECTION.

1 In the first day of the resurrection I am examined whether I bring these things which are commanded, whether I am adorned with virtuous works, whether I am overshadowed by the boughs of chastity. For account the resurrection to be the erection of the tabernacle. Account that the things which are taken for the putting together of the tabernacle are the works of righteousness. I take, therefore, on the first day the things which are set down, that is, on the day in which I stand to be judged, whether I have adorned my tabernacle with the things commanded; if those things are found on that day which here in time we are commanded to prepare, and there to offer to God. But come, let us consider what follows. "And ye shall take yon," He says, "on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows (and the tree of chastity) of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God." The Jews, uncircumcised in heart, think that the most beautiful fruit of wood is the citron wood, on account of its size; nor are they ashamed to say that God is worshipped with cedar, to whom not all the quadrupeds of the earth would suffice as a burnt-offering or as incense for burning. And moreover, O hard breasts, if the citron appear beautiful to you, why not the pomegranate, and other fruits of trees, and amongst them apples, which much surpass the citron? Indeed, in the Song of Songs, Solomon having made mention of all these fruits, passes over in silence the citron only. But this deceives the unwary, for they have not understood that the tree of life which Paradise once bore, now again the Church has produced for all, even the ripe and comely fruit of faith.

2 Such fruit it is necessary that we bring when we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, on the first day of the feast; for if we are without it we shall not be able to feast with God, nor to have part, according to John, in the first resurrection. For the tree of life is wisdom first begotten of all. "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her," says the prophet; "and happy is every one that retaineth her." "A tree planted by the waterside, that will bring forth his fruit in due season;" that is, learning and charity and discretion are imparted in due time to those who come to the waters of redemption. He that hath not believed in Christ, nor hath understood that He is the first principle and the tree of life, since he cannot show to God his tabernacle adorned with the most goodly of fruits, how shall he celebrate the feast? How shall he rejoice? Desirest thou to know the goodly fruit of the tree? Consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how pleasant they are beyond the children of men. Good fruit came by Moses, that is the Law, but not so goodly as the Gospel. For the Law is a kind of figure and shadow of things to come, but the Gospel is truth and the grace of life. Pleasant was the fruit of the prophets, but not so pleasant as the fruit of immortality which is plucked from the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.-THE MIND CLEARER WHEN CLEANSED FROM SIN; THE ORNAMENTS OF THE MIND AND THE ORDER OF VIRTUE; CHARITY DEEP AND FULL; CHASTITY THE LAST ORNAMENT OF ALL; THE VERY USE OF MATRIMONY TO BE RESTRAINED.

1 "And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees." This signifies the exercise of divine discipline, by which the mind that subdues the passions is cleansed and adorned by the sweeping out and ejection from it of sins. For it is necessary to come cleansed and adorned to the feast, arrayed, as by a decorator, in the discipline and exercise of virtue. For the mind being cleansed by laborious exercises from the distracting thoughts which darken it, quickly perceives the truth; as the widow in the Gospels found the piece of money after she had swept the house and cast out the dirt, that is, the passions which obscure and cloud the mind, which increase in us from our luxuriousness and carelessness. Whoso, therefore, desires to come to that Feast of Tabernacles, to be numbered with the saints, let him first procure the goodly fruit of faith, then palm branches, that is, attentive meditation upon and study of the Scriptures, afterwards the far-spreading and thickly-leaved branches of charity, which He commands us to

take after the palm branches; most fitly calling charity dense boughs, because it is all thick and close and very fruitful, not having anything bare or empty, but all full, both branches and trunks. Such is charity, having no part void or unfruitful. For "though I sell all my goods and give to the poor, and though I yield up my body to the fire, and though I have so great faith that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Charity, therefore, is a tree the thickest and most fruitful of all, full and abounding copiously abounding in graces.

2 After this, what else does He will that we should take? Willow branches; by that figure indicating righteousness, because "the just," according to the prophet, shall spring up "as grass in the midst of the waters, as willows by the watercourses," flourishing in the word. Lastly, to crown all, it is commanded that the bough of the Agnos tree be brought to decorate the Tabernacle, because it is by its very name the tree of chastity, by which those already named are adorned. Let the wanton now be gone. who, through their love of pleasure, reject chastity. How shall they enter into the feast with Christ who have not adorned their tabernacle with boughs of chastity, that God-making and blessed tree with which all who are hastening to that assembly and nuptial banquet ought to be begirt, and to cover their loins? For come, fair virgins, consider the Scripture itself, and its commands, how the Divine word has assumed chastity to be the crown of those virtues and duties that have been mentioned, showing how becoming and desirable it is for the resurrection, and that without it no one will obtain the promises which we who profess virginity supremely cultivate and offer to the Lord. They also possess it who live chastely with their wives, and do, as it were about the trunk, yield its lowly branches bearing chastity, not being able like us to reach its lofty and mighty boughs, or even to touch them;

3 yet they, too, offer no less truly, although in a less degree, the branches of chastity. But those who are goaded on by their lusts, although they do not commit fornication, yet who, even in the things which are permitted with a lawful wife, through the heat of unsubdued concupiscence are excessive in embraces, how shall they celebrate the feast? how shall they rejoice, who have not adorned their tabernacle, that is their flesh, with the boughs of the Agnos, nor have listened to that which has been said; that "they that have wives be as though they had none?"

CHAPTER V.—THE MYSTERY OF THE TABERNACLES.

¹ Wherefore, above all other things, I say to those who love contests, and who are strong-minded, that without delay they should honour chastity, as a thing the most useful and glorious. For in the new and indissoluble creation, whoever shall not be found decorated with the boughs of chastity, shall neither obtain rest, because he has not fulfilled the command of God according to the law, nor shall he enter into the land of promise, because he has not previously celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. For they only who have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles come to the Holy Land, setting out from those dwellings which are called tabernacles, until they come to enter into the temple and city of God, advancing to a greater and more glorious joy, as the Jewish types indicate. For like as the Israelites, having left the borders of Egypt, first came to the Tabernacles, and from hence, having again set forth, came into the land of promise, so also do we. For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection, which is the true Feast of the Tabernacles, and there having set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection, which is the day of judgment, celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath.

² Then again from thence I, a follower of Jesus, "who hath entered into the heavens," as they also, after the rest of the Feast of Tabernacles, came into the land of promise, come into the heavens, not continuing to remain in tabernacles—that is, my body not remaining as it was before, but, after the space of a thousand years, changed from a human and corruptible form into angelic size and beauty, where at last we virgins, when the festival of the resurrection is consummated, shall pass from the wonderful place of the tabernacle to greater and better things, ascending into the very house of God above the heavens, as, says the Psalmist, "in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as keep holy day. I, O Arete, my mistress, offer as a gift to thee this robe, adorned according to my ability. ³ Euboulíos. I am much moved, O Gregorion, considering within myself in how great anxiety of mind Domnina must be from the character of the discourses, perplexed in heart as she is, and with good cause, fearing lest she should be at a loss for words, and should speak more feebly than the rest of the virgins, since they have spoken on the subject with such ability and variety. If, therefore, she was evidently moved, come and complete this too; for I wonder if she had

anything to say, being the last speaker. Gregorion. Theopatra told me, Euboulios, that she was greatly moved, but she was not perplexed from want of words. After, therefore, Tusiane had ceased, Arete looked at her and said, Come, my daughter, do thou also deliver a discourse, that our banquet may be quite complete. At this Domnina, blushing, and after a long delay, scarcely looking up, rose to pray, and turning round, invoked Wisdom to be her present helper. And when she had prayed, Theopatra said that suddenly courage came to her, and a certain divine confidence possessed her, and she said:-

The Banquet, Discourse 10: Domnina

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.-CHASTITY ALONE AID AND EFFECTS THE MOST PRAISEWORTHY GOVERNMENT OF THE SOUL.

O Arete, I also, omitting the long preludes of exordiums, will endeavour according to my ability to enter upon the subject, lest, by delaying upon those matters which are outside the subject in hand, I should speak of them at greater length than their importance would warrant. For I account it a very great part of prudence not to make long speeches, which merely charm the ears, before coming to the main question, but to begin forthwith at the point in debate. So I will begin from thence, for it is time. Nothing can so much profit a man, O fair virgins, with respect to moral excellence, as chastity; for chastity alone accomplishes and brings it about that the soul should be governed in the noblest and best way, and should be set free, pure from the stains and pollutions of the world. For which reason, when Christ taught us to cultivate it, and showed its unsurpassable beauty, the kingdom of the Evil One was destroyed, who aforetime led captive and enslaved the whole race of men, so that none of the more ancient people pleased the Lord, but all were overcome by errors, since the law was not of itself sufficient to free the human race from corruption, until virginity, succeeding the law, governed men by the precepts of Christ. Nor truly had the first men so often run headlong into combats and slaughter, into lust and idolatry, if the righteousness that is by the law had been to them sufficient for salvation. Now truly they were then confused by great and frequent calamities; but from the time when Christ was incarnate, and armed and adorned His flesh with virginity, the savage tyrant who was master of incontinence was taken away, and peace and faith have dominion, men no longer turning so much as before to idolatry.

CHAPTER II.-THE ALLEGORY OF THE TREES DEMANDING A KING, IN
THE BOOK OF JUDGES, EXPLAINED.

¹But lest I should appear to some to be sophistical, and to conjecture these things from mere probabilities, and to babble, I will bring forward to you, O virgins, from the Old Testament, written prophecy from the Book of Judges, to show that I speak the truth, where the future reign of chastity was already clearly foretold. For we read: "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by the they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

²Now, that these things are not said of trees growing out of the earth, is clear. For inanimate trees cannot be assembled in council to choose a king, inasmuch as they firmly fixed by deep roots to the earth. But altogether are these things narrated concerning souls which, before the incarnation of Christ, too deeply luxuriating in transgressions, approach to God as suppliants, and ask His mercy, and that they may be governed by His pity and compassion, which Scripture expresses under the figure of the olive, because oil is of great advantage to our bodies, and takes away our fatigues and ailments, and affords light. For all lamp-light increases when nourished by oil. So also the mercies of God entirely dissolve death, and assist the human race, and nourish the light of the heart. And consider whether the laws, from the first created man until Christ in succession, were not set forth in these words by the Scripture by figments, in opposition to which the devil has deceived the human race. And it has likened the fig-tree to the command given to man in paradise, because, when he was deceived, he covered his nakedness with the leaves of a fig-tree; and the vine to the precept given to Noah at the time of the deluge, because, when overpowered by wine, he was mocked. The

olive signifies the law given to Moses in the desert, because the prophetic grace, the holy oil, had failed from their inheritance when they broke the law.

³ Lastly, the bramble not inaptly refers to the law which was given to the apostles for the salvation of the world; because by their instruction we have been taught virginity, of which alone the devil has not been able to make a deceptive image. For which cause, also, four Gospels have been given, because God has four times given the Gospel to the human race, and has instructed them by four laws, the times of which are clearly known by the diversity of the fruits. For the fig-tree, on account of its sweetness and richness, represents the delights of man, which he had in paradise before the fall. Indeed, not rarely, as we shall afterwards show, the Holy Spirit takes the fruit of the fig-tree as an emblem of goodness. But the vine, on account of the gladness produced by wine, and the joy of those who were saved from wrath and from the deluge, signifies the change produced from fear and anxiety into joy. Moreover, the olive, on account of the oil which it produces, indicates the compassion of God, who again, after the deluge, bore patiently when men turned aside to ungodliness, so that He gave them the law and manifested Himself to some, and nourished by oil the light of virtue, now almost extinguished.

CHAPTER III.-THE BRAMBLE AND THE AGNOS THE SYMBOL OF
CHASTITY; THE FOUR GOSPELS, THAT IS, TEACHINGS OR LAWS,
INSTRUCTING TO SALVATION.

¹ Now the bramble commends chastity, for the bramble and the agnos is the same tree: by some it is called bramble, by others agnos. Perhaps it is because the plant is akin to virginity that it is called bramble and agnos; bramble, because of its strength and firmness against pleasures; agnos, because it always continues chaste. Hence the Scripture relates that Elijah, fleeing from the face of the woman Jezebel, at first came under a bramble, and there, having been heard, received strength and took food; signifying that to him who flies from the incitements of lust, and from a woman-that is, from pleasure-the tree of chastity is a refuge and a shade, ruling men from the coming of Christ, the chief of virgins. For when the first laws, which were published in the times of Adam and Noah and Moses, were unable to give salvation to man, the evangelical law alone has saved all.

2 And this is the cause why the fig-tree may be said not to have obtained the kingdom over trees, which, in a spiritual sense, mean men; and the fig-tree the command, because man desired, even after the fall, again to be subject to the dominion of virtue, and not to be deprived of the immortality of the paradise of pleasure. But, having transgressed, he was rejected and cast far away, as one who could no longer be governed by immortality, nor was capable of receiving it. And the first message to him after the transgression was preached by Noah, to which, if he had applied his mind, he might have been saved from sin; for in it he promised both happiness and rest from evils, if he gave heed to it with all his might, just as the vine promises to yield wine to those who cultivate it with care and labour. But neither did this law rule mankind, for men did not obey it, although zealously preached by Noah. But, after they began to be surrounded and drowning by the waters, they began to repent, and to promise that they would obey the commandments. Wherefore with scorn they are rejected as subjects; that is, they are contemptuously told that they cannot be helped by the law; the Spirit answering them back and reproaching them because they had deserted those men whom God had commanded to help them, and to save them, and make them glad; such as Noah and those with him. "Even to you, O rebellious," said he, "I come, to bring help to you who are destitute of prudence, and who differ in nothing from dry trees, and who formerly did not believe me when I preached that you ought to flee from present things."

CHAPTER IV.-THE LAW USELESS FOR SALVATION; THE LAST LAW OF
CHASTITY UNDER THE FIGURE OF THE BRAMBLE.

And so those men, having been thus rejected from the divine care, and the human race having again given themselves up to error, again God sent forth, by Moses, a law to rule them and recall them to righteousness. But these, thinking fit to bid a long farewell to this law, turned to idolatry. Hence God gave them up to mutual slaughters, to exiles, and captivities, the law it self confessing, as it were, that it could not save them. Therefore, worn out with ills and afflicted, they again promised that they would obey the commandments; until God, pitying man the fourth time, sent chastity to rule over them, which Scripture consequently called the bramble. And she consuming pleasures threatens besides, that unless all undoubtedly obey her, and truly come to her, she will destroy all with fire, since there will be hereafter no other law or doctrine but judgment and fire. For this reason, man hence-

forth began to do righteousness, and firmly to believe in God, and to separate himself from the devil. Thus chastity was sent down, as being most useful and helpful to men. For of her alone was the devil unable to forge an imitation to lead men astray, as is the case with the other precepts.

CHAPTER V.-THE MALIGNITY OF THE DEVIL AS AN IMITATOR IN ALL THINGS; TWO KINDS OF FIG-TREES AND VINES.

¹ The fig-tree, as I said, from the sweetness and excellence of its fruit, being taken as a type of the delights of paradise, the devil, having beguiled the man by its imitations, led him captive, persuading him to conceal the nakedness of his body by fig-leaves; that is, by their friction he excited him to sexual pleasure. Again, those that had been saved from the deluge, he intoxicated with a drink which was an imitation of the vine of spiritual joy; and again he mocked them, having stripped them of virtue. And what I say will hereafter be more clear. The enemy, by his power, always imitates the forms of virtue and righteousness, not for the purpose of truly promoting its exercise, but for deception and hypocrisy. For in order that those who fly from death he may entice to death, he is outwardly dyed with the colours of immortality. And hence he wishes to seem a fig-tree or vine, and to produce sweetness and joy, and is "transformed into an angel of light," ensnaring many by the appearance of piety.

² For we find in the Sacred Writings that there are two kinds of fig-trees and vines, "the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil; " "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." and wine which is the poison of dragons, and the incurable venom of asps. But from the time when chastity began to rule over men, the fraud was detected and overcome, Christ, the chief of virgins, overturning it. So both the true fig-tree and the true vine yield fruit after that the power of chastity has laid hold upon all men, as Joel the prophet preaches, saying: "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for He hath given you food unto righteousness;" calling the former laws the vine and the fig, trees bearing fruit unto righteousness for the children of the spiritual Zion, which bore fruit after the incarnation of the Word, when chastity ruled over us, when formerly, on account of sin and much error, they had checked and destroyed their buds. For the true vine

and the true fig-tree were not able to yield such nourishment to us as would be profitable for life, whilst as yet the false fig-tree, variously adorned for the purpose of fraud, flourished. But when the Lord dried up the false branches, the imitations of the true branches, uttering the sentence against the bitter fig-tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," then those which were truly fruit-bearing trees flourished and yielded food unto righteousness.

3 The vine, and that not in a few places, refers to the Lord Himself, and the fig-tree to the Holy Spirit, as the Lord "maketh glad the hearts of men," and the Spirit healeth them. And therefore Hezekiah is commanded first to make a plaster with a lump of figs-that is, the fruit of the Spirit-that he may be healed-that is, according to the apostle-by love; for he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" which, on account of their great pleasantness, the prophet calls figs. Micah also says, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid." Now it is certain that those who have taken refuge and rested under the Spirit, and under the shadow of the Word, shall not be alarmed, nor frightened by him who troubles the hearts of men.

CHAPTER VI.-THE MYSTERY OF THE VISION OF ZECHARIAH.

1 Moreover, Zechariah shows that the olive shadows forth the law of Moses, speaking thus: "And the angel that talked with me came again and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it.... And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. And after a few words, the prophet, asking what are the olives on the right and left of the candlestick, and what the two olive-boughs in the hands of the two pipes, the angel answered and said: "These are the two sons of fruitfulness which stand by the Lord of the whole earth," signifying the two first-born virtues that are waiting upon God, which, in His dwelling, supply around the wick, through the boughs, the spiritual oil of God, that man may have the light of divine knowledge. But the two boughs of the two olives are the law and the prophets, around, as it were, the lot of the inheritance, of which Christ and the Holy Spirit are the authors, we ourselves meanwhile not being able to take the whole fruit and the greatness of these plants, before chastity began to

rule the world, but only their boughs—to wit, the law and the prophets—did we formerly cultivate, and those moderately, often letting them slip.

² For who was ever able to receive Christ or the Spirit, unless he first purified himself? For the exercise which prepares the soul from childhood for desirable and delectable glory, and carries this grace safely thither with ease, and from small toils raises up mighty hopes, is chastity, which gives immortality to our bodies; which it becomes all men willingly to prefer in honour and to praise above all things; some, that by its means they may be betrothed to the Word, practising virginity; and others, that by it they may be freed from the curse, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." ³ This, O Arete, is the discourse on virginity which you required of me, accomplished according to my ability; which I pray, O mistress, although it is mediocre and short, that thou wilt receive with kindness from me who was chosen to speak last.

The Banquet, Discourse 11: Arete

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CHAPTER I.-THE TRUE AND CHASTE VIRGINS FEW; CHASTITY A
CONTEST; THEKLA CHIEF OF VIRGINS,

¹I do accept it, Theopatra related that Arete said, and approve of it all. For it is an excellent thing, even although you had not spoken so clearly, to take up and go through with earnestness those things which have been said, not to prepare a sweet entertainment for those who listen, but for correction, recollection, and abstinence. For whoever teaches that chastity is to be preferred and embraced first of all among my pursuits, rightly advises; which many think that they honour and cultivate, but which few, so to speak, really honour. For it is not one who has studied to restrain his flesh from the pleasure of carnal delight that cultivates chastity, if he do not keep in check the rest of the desires; but rather he dishonours it, and that in no small degree, by base lusts, exchanging pleasures for pleasures. Nor if he have strongly resisted the desires of the senses, but is lifted up with vainglory, and from this cause is able to repress the heats of burning lust, and reckon them all as nothing, can he be thought to honour chastity; for he dishonours it in that he is lifted up with pride, cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, that is, the flesh and the body, but injuring the heart by conceit and ambition. Nor when any one is conceited of riches is he desirous of honouring chastity;

²he dishonours it more than all, preferring a little gain to that to which nothing is comparable of those things that are in this life esteemed. For all riches and gold "in respect of it are as a little sand. And neither does he who loves himself above measure, and eagerly considers that which is expedient for himself alone, regardless of the necessities of his neighbour, honour chastity, but he also dishonours it. For he who has repelled from himself charity, mercy, and humanity, is much inferior to those who honourably ex-

ercise chastity. Nor is it right, on the one hand, by the use of chastity to keep virginity, and, on the other hand, to pollute the soul by evil deeds and lust; nor here to profess purity and continence, and there to pollute it by indulgence in vices. Nor, again, here to declare that the things of this world bring no care to himself; there to be eager in procuring them, and in concern about them. But all the members are to be preserved intact and free from corruption; not only those which are sexual, but those members also which minister to the service of lusts. For it would be ridiculous to preserve the organs of generation pure, but not the tongue; or to preserve the tongue, but neither the eyesight, the ears, nor the hands; or lastly, to preserve these pure, but not the mind, defiling it with pride and anger.

³It is altogether necessary for him who has resolved that he will not err from the practice of chastity, to keep all his members and senses clean and under restraint, as is customary with the planks of ships, whose fastenings the ship-masters diligently join together, lest by any means the way and access may lie open for sin to pour itself into the mind. For great pursuits are liable to great falls, and evil is more opposed to that which is really good than to that which is not good. For many who thought that to repress vehement lascivious desires constituted chastity, neglecting other duties connected with it, failed also in this, and have brought blame upon those endeavouring after it by the fight way, as you have proved who are a model in everything, leading a virgin life in deed and word. And now what that is which becomes a virgin state has been described.

⁴And you all in my hearing having sufficiently contended in speaking, I pronounce victors and crown; but Thekla with a larger and thicker chaplet, as the chief of you, and as having shone with greater lustre than the rest.

CHAPTER II.-THEKLA SINGING DECOROUSLY A HYMN, THE REST OF
THE VIRGINS SING WITH HER; JOHN THE BAPTIST A MARTYR TO
CHASTITY; THE CHURCH THE SPOUSE OF GOD, PURE AND VIRGIN.

¹Theopatra said that Arete having said these things, commanded them all to rise, and, standing under the Agnos, to send up to the Lord in a becoming manner a hymn of thanksgiving; and that Thekla should begin and should lead the rest. And when they had stood up, she said that Thekla, standing in the midst of the virgins on the right of Arete, decorously sang; but the rest, standing together in a circle after the manner of a chorus, responded to her: "I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I

go to meet Thee." Thekla. 1. From above, O virgins, the sound of a noise that wakes the dead has come, bidding us all to meet the Bridegroom in white robes, and with torches towards the east. Arise, before the King enters within the gates. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee.

² Thekla. 2. Fleeing from the sorrowful happiness of mortals, and having despised the luxuriant delights of life and its love, I desire to be protected under Thy life-giving arms, and to behold Thy beauty for ever, O blessed One. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 3. Leaving marriage and the beds of mortals and my golden home for Thee, O King, I have come in undefiled robes, in order that I might enter with Thee within Thy happy bridal chamber. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 4. Having escaped, O blessed One, from the innumerable enchanting wiles of the serpent, and, moreover, from the flame of fire, and from the mortal-destroying assaults of wild beasts, I await Thee from heaven. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee.

³ Thekla. 5. I forget my own country, O Lord, through desire of Thy grace. I forget, also, the company of virgins, my fellows, the desire even of mother and of kindred, for Thou, O Christ, art all things to me. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 6. Giver of life art Thou, O Christ. Hail, light that never sets, receive this praise. The company of virgins call upon Thee, Perfect Flower, Love, Joy, Prudence, Wisdom, Word. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 7. With open gates, O beautifully adorned Queen, admit us within thy chambers. O spotless, gloriously triumphant Bride, breathing beauty, we stand by Christ, robed as He is, celebrating thy happy nuptials, O youthful maiden. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee.

⁴ Thekla. 8. The virgins standing without the chamber, with bitter tears and deep moans, wail and mournfully lament that their lamps are gone out, having failed to enter in due time the chamber of joy. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 9. For turning from the sacred way of life, unhappy ones, they have

neglected to prepare sufficiency of oil for the path of life; bearing lamps whose bright light is dead, they groan from the inward recesses of their mind. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 10. Here are cups full of sweet nectar; let us drink, O virgins, for it is celestial drink, which the Bridegroom hath placed for those duly called to the wedding. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee.

⁵ Thekla. 11. Abel, clearly prefiguring Thy death, O blessed One, with flowing blood, and eyes lifted up to heaven, said, Cruelly slain by a brother's hand, O Word, I pray Thee to receive me. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 12. Thy valiant son Joseph, O Word, won the greatest prize of virginity, when I a woman heated with desire forcibly drew him to an unlawful bed; but he giving no heed to her fled stripped, and crying aloud:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 13. Jephthah offered his fresh slaughtered virgin daughter a sacrifice to God, like a lamb; and she, nobly fulfilling the type of Thy body, O blessed One, bravely cried:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee.

⁶ Thekla. 14. Daring Judith, by clever wiles having cut off the head of the leader of the foreign hosts, whom previously she had allured by her beautiful form, without polluting the limbs of her body, with a victor's shout said:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 15. Seeing the great beauty of Susanna, the two Judges, maddened with desire, said, O dear lady, we have come desiring secret intercourse with thee; but she with tremulous cries said:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 16. It is far better for me to die than to betray my nuptials to you, O mad for women, and so to suffer the eternal justice of God in fiery vengeance. Save me now, O Christ, from these evils.

⁷ Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 17. Thy Precursor, washing multitudes of men in flowing lustral water, unjustly by a wicked man, on account of his chastity, was led to slaughter; but as he stained the dust with his life-blood, he cried to Thee, O blessed One:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding a lighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 18.

The parent of Thy life, that unspotted Grace and undefiled Virgin, bearing in her womb without the ministry of man, by an immaculate conception, and who thus became suspected of having betrayed the marriage-bed, she, O blessed One, when pregnant, thus spoke:- Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 19. Wishing to see Thy nuptial day, O blessed One, as many angels as Thou, O King, calledst from above, bearing the best gifts to Thee, came in unsullied robes:-

8 Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 20. In hymns, O blessed spouse of God, we attendants of the Bride honour Thee, O undefiled virgin Church of snow-white form, dark haired, chaste, spotless, beloved. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 21. Corruption has fled, and the tearful pains of diseases; death has been taken away, all folly has perished, consuming mental grief is no more; for again the grace of the God-Christ has suddenly shone upon mortals. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 22. Paradise is no longer bereft of mortals, for by divine decree he no longer dwells there as formerly, thrust out from thence when he was free from corruption, and from fear by the various wiles of the serpents, O blessed One.

9 Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 23. Singing the new song, now the company of virgins attends thee towards the heavens, O Queen, all manifestly crowned with white lilies, and bearing in their hands bright lights. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee. Thekla. 24. O blessed One, who inhabited the undefiled seats of heaven without beginning, who governed all things by everlasting power, O Father, with Thy Son, we are here, receive us also within the gates of life. Chorus. I keep myself pure for Thee, O Bridegroom, and holding alighted torch I go to meet Thee.

CHAPTER III.-WHICH ARE THE BETTER, THE CONTINENT, OR THOSE
WHO DELIGHT IN TRANQUILLITY OF LIFE? CONTESTS THE PERIL OF
CHASTITY: THE FELICITY OF TRANQUILLITY; PURIFIED AND
TRANQUIL MINDS GODS: THEY WHO SHALL SEE GOD; VIRTUE
DISCIPLINED BY TEMPTATIONS.

¹Euboulios. Deservedly, O Gregorion, has Thekla borne off the chief prize. Gregorion. Deservedly indeed. Euboulios. But what about the stranger Telmisiake? Tell me, was she not listening from without? I wonder if she could keep silence on hearing of this banquet, and would not forthwith, as a bird flies to its food, listen to the things which were spoken. Gregorion. The report is that she was present with Methodios when he inquired respecting these things of Arete. But it is a good as well as a happy thing to have such a mistress and guide as Arete, that is virtue. Euboulios. But, Gregorion, which shall we say are the better, those who without lust govern concupiscence, or those who under the assaults of concupiscence continue pure? Gregorion. For my part, I think those who are free from lust, for they have their mined undefiled, and are altogether uncorrupted, sinning in no respect.

²Euboulios. Well, I swear by chastity, and wisely, O Gregorion. But lest in any wise I hinder you, if I gainsay your words, it is that I may the better learn, and that no one hereafter may refute me. Gregorion. Gainsay me as you will, you have my permission. For, Euboulios, I think that I know sufficient to teach you that he who is not concupiscent is better than he who is. If I cannot, then there is no one who can convince you. Euboulios. Bless me! I am glad that you answer me so magnanimously, and show how wealthy you are as regards wisdom. Gregorion. A mere chatterer, so you seem to be, O Euboulios. Euboulios. Why so? Gregorion. Because you ask rather for the sake of amusement than of truth. Euboulios. Speak fair, I pray you, my good friend; for I greatly admire your wisdom and renown. I say this because, with reference to the things that many wise men often dispute among themselves, you say that you not only understand them, but also vaunt that you can teach another.

³Gregorion. Now tell me truly whether it is a difficulty with you to receive the opinion, that they who are not concupiscent excel those who are concupiscent, and yet restrain themselves? or are you joking? Euboulios. How so, when I tell you that I do not know? But, come, tell me, O wisest lady, in what do the non-concupiscent and chaste excel the concupiscent who live chastely? Gregorion. Because, in the first place, they have the soul itself pure,

and the Holy Spirit always dwells in it, seeing that it is not distracted and disturbed by fancies and unrestrained thoughts, so as to pollute the mind. But they are in every way inaccessible to lust, both as to their flesh and to their heart, enjoying tranquillity from passions. But they who are allured from without, through the sense of sight, with fancies, and receiving lust flowing like a stream into the heart, are often not less polluted, even when they think that they contend and fight against pleasures, being vanquished in their mind.

4 Euboulios. Shall we then say that they who serenely live and are not disturbed by lusts are pure? Gregorion. Certainly, For these are they whom God makes gods in the beatitudes; they I who believe in Him without doubt. And He says that they shall look upon God with confidence, because they bring in nothing that darkens or confuses the eye of the soul for the beholding of God; but all desire of things secular being eliminated, they not only, as I said, preserve the flesh pure from carnal connection, but even the heart, in which, especially, as in a temple, the Holy Spirit rests and dwells, is open to no unclean thoughts. Euboulios. Stay now; for I think that from hence we shall the better go on to the discovery of what things are truly the best; and, tell me, do you call anyone a good pilot? Gregorion. I certainly do.

5 Euboulios. Whether is it he that saves his vessel in great and perplexing storms, or is it he who does so in a breathless calm? Gregorion. He that does so in a great and perplexing storm. Euboulios. Shall we not then say that the soul, which is deluged with the surging waves of the passions, and yet does not, on that account, weary or grow faint, but direct her vessel—that is, the flesh—nobly into the port of chastity, is better and more estimable than he that navigates in calm weather? Gregorion. We will say so. Euboulios. For to be prepared against the entrance of the gales of the Evil Spirit, and not to be cast away or overcome, but to refer all to Christ, and strongly to contend against pleasures, brings greater praise than he wins who lives a virgin life calmly and with ease. Gregorion. It appears so. Euboulios. And what saith the Lord? Does He not seem to show that he who retains continence, though concupiscent, excels him who, having no concupiscence, leads a virgin life?

6 Gregorion. Where does He say so? Euboulios. Where, comparing a wise man to a house well founded, He declares him immoveable because he cannot be overthrown by rains, and floods, and winds; likening, as it would seem, these storms to lusts, but the immoveable and unshaken firmness of

the soul in chastity to the rock. Gregorion. You appear to speak what is true. Euboulios. And what say you of the physician? Do you not call him the best who has been proved in great diseases, and has healed many patients? Gregorion. I do. Euboulios. But the one who has never at any time practised, nor ever had the sick in his hands, is he not still in all respects the inferior? Gregorion. Yes. Euboulios. Then we may certainly say that a soul which is contained by a concupiscent body, and which appeases with the medicaments of temperance the disorders arising from the heat of lusts, carries off the palm for healing, over one to whose lot it has fallen to govern aright a body which is free from lust.

7 Gregorion. It must be allowed. Euboulios. And how is it in wrestling? Whether is the better wrestler he who has many and strong antagonists, and continually is contending without being worsted, or he who has no opponents? Gregorion. Manifestly he who wrestles. Euboulios. And, in wrestling, is not the athlete who contends the more experienced? Gregorion. It must be granted. Euboulios. Therefore it is clear that he whose soul contends against the impulses of lust, and is not borne down by it, but draws back and sets himself in array against it, appears stronger than he who does not lust. Gregorion. True. Euboulios. What then? Does it not appear to you, Gregorion, that there is more courage in being valiant against the assaults of base desires? Gregorion. Yes, indeed. Euboulios. Is not this courage the strength of virtue? Gregorion. Plainly so. Euboulios. Therefore, if endurance be the strength of virtue, is not the soul, which is troubled by lusts, and yet perseveres against them, stronger than that which is not so troubled?

8 Gregorion. Yes. Euboulios. And if stronger, then better? Gregorion. Truly. Euboulios. Therefore the soul which is concupiscent, and exercises self-control, as appears from what has been said, is better than that which is not concupiscent, and exercises self-control. Gregorion. You speak truly, and I shall desire still more fully to discourse with you concerning these things. If, therefore, it pleases you, tomorrow I will come again to hear respecting them. Now, however, as you see, it is time to betake ourselves to the care of the outward man.

Concerning Free-Will

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

CONCERNING FREE-WILL

¹ Orthodoxus. The old man of Ithaca, according to the legend of the Greeks, when he wished to hear the song of the Sirens, on account of the charm of their voluptuous voice, sailed to Sicily in bonds, and stopped up the ears of his companions; not that he grudged them the hearing, or desired to load himself with bonds, but because the consequence of those singers' music to those who heard it was death. For such, in the opinion of the Greeks, are the charms of the Sirens. Now I am not within hearing of any such song as this; nor have I any desire to hear the Sirens who chant men's dirges, and whose silence is more profitable to men than their voice; but I pray to enjoy the pleasure of a divine voice, which, though it be often heard, I long to hear again; not that I am overcome with the charm of a voluptuous voice, but I am being taught divine mysteries, and expect as the result, not death but eternal salvation. For the singers are not the deadly Sirens of the Greeks, but a divine choir of prophets, with whom there is no need to stop the ears of one's companions, nor to load one's-self with bonds, in fear of the penalty of hearing. For, in the one case, the hearer, with the entrance of the voice, ceases to live; in the other, the more he hears, the better life will he enjoy, being led onwards by a divine Spirit.

² Let every one come, then, and hear the divine song without any fear. There are not with us the Sirens from the shore of Sicily, nor the bonds of Ulysses, nor the wax poured melting into men's ears; but a loosening of all bonds, and liberty to listen to every one that approaches. For it is worthy of us to hear such a song as this; and to hear such singers as these, seems to me to be a thing to be prayed for. But if one wishes to hear the choir of the

apostles as well, he will find the same harmony of song. For the others sang beforehand the divine plan in a mystical manner; but these sing an interpretation of what has been mystically announced by the former. Oh, concordant harmony, composed by the Divine Spirit! Oh, the comeliness of those who sing of the mysteries of God? Oh, that I also may join in these songs in my prayer. Let us then also sing the like song, and raise the hymn to the Holy Father, glorifying in the Spirit Jesus, who is in His bosom.

³Shun not, man, a spiritual hymn, nor be ill-disposed to listen to it. Death belongs not to it; a story of salvation is our song. Already I seem to taste better enjoyments, as I discourse on such subjects as these; and especially when there is before me such a flowering meadow, that is to say, our assembly of those who unite in singing and hearing the divine mysteries. Wherefore I dare to ask you to listen to me with ears free from all envy, without imitating the jealousy of Cain, or persecuting your brother, like Esau, or approving the brethren of Joseph, because they, hated their brother on account of his words; but differing far from all these, insomuch that each of you is used to speak the mind of his neighbour. And, on this account, there is no evil jealousy among you, as ye have undertaken to supply your brother's deficiencies. O noble audience, and venerable company, and spiritual food! That I may ever have a right to share in such pleasures, be this my prayer!

⁴Valentinian. As I was walking yesterday evening, my friend, along the shore of the sea, and was gazing on it somewhat intently, I saw an extraordinary instance of divine power, and a work of art produced by wise science, if at least such a thing may be called a work of art. For as that verse of Homer says,—"As when two adverse winds blowing from Thrace, Boreas and Zephyrus, the fishy deep Vex sudden, all around, the sable flood High curled, flings forth the salt weed on the shore; "-So it seemed to me to have happened yesterday. For I saw waves very like mountain-tops, and, so to speak, reaching up to heaven itself. Whence I expected nothing else but that the whole land would be deluged, and I began to form in my mind a place of escape, and a Noah's ark. But it was not as I thought; for, just as the sea rose to a crest, it broke up again into itself, without overstepping its own limits, having, so to speak, a feeling of awe for a divine decree. And as oftentimes a servant, compelled by his master to do something against his will, obeys the command through fear, while he dares not say a word of what he suffers in

his unwillingness to do it, but, full of rage, mutters to himself,-somewhat so it appeared to me that the sea, as if enraged and confining its awe within itself, kept itself under, as not willing to let its Master perceive its anger.

5 On these occurrences I began to gaze in silence, and wished to measure in my mind the heaven and its sphere. I began to inquire whence it rises and where it sets; also what sort of motion it had-whether a progressive one, that is to say, one from place to place, or a revolving one; and, besides, how its movement is continued. And, of a truth, it seemed worth while to inquire also about the sun,-what is the manner of his being set in the heaven; also what is the orbit he traverses; also whither it is that, after a short time, he retires; and why it is that even he does not go out of his proper course: but he, too, as one may say, is observing a commandment of a higher power, and appears with us just when he is allowed to do so, and departs as if he were called away.

6 So, as I was investigating these things, I saw that the sunshine was departing, and the daylight failing, and that immediately darkness came on; and the sun was succeeded by the moon, who, at her first rising, was not of full size, but after advancing in her course presented a larger appearance. And I did not cease inquiring about her also, but examined the cause of her waning and waxing, and why it is that she, too, observes the revolution of days; and it seemed to me from all this that there is a divine government and power controlling the whole, which we may justly call God. And thereupon I began to praise the Creator, as I saw the earth fast fixed, and living creatures in such variety, and the blossoms of plants with their many hues. But my mind did not rest upon these things alone; but thereupon I began to inquire whence they have their origin-whether from some source eternally co-existent with God, or from Himself alone, none co-existing with Him; for that He has made nothing out of that which has no existence appeared to me the right view to take, unless my reason were altogether untrustworthy. For it is the nature of things which come into being to derive their origin from what is already existing. And it seemed to me that it might be said with equal truth, that nothing is eternally co-existent with God distinct from Himself, but that whatever exists has its origin from Him, and I was persuaded of this also by the undeniable disposition of the elements, and by the orderly arrangement of nature about them.

7 So, with some such thoughts of the fair order of things, I returned home. But on the day following, that is today, as I came I saw two beings of the same race-I mean men-striking and abusing one another; and another, again, wishing to strip his neighbour. And now some began to venture upon a more terrible deed; for one stripped a corpse, and exposed again to the light of day a body that had been once hidden in the earth, and treated a form like his own with such insult as to leave the corpse to be food for dogs; while another bared his sword, and attacked a man like himself. And he wanted to procure safety by flight; but the other ceased not from pursuing, nor would control his anger. And why should I say more? It is enough that he attacked him, and at once smote him with his sword. So the wounded man became a suppliant to his fellow, and spread out his hands in supplication, and was willing to give up his clothing, and only made a claim for life. But the other did not subdue his anger, nor pity his fellowman, nor would he see his own image in the being before him; but, like a wild beast, made preparations with his sword for feeding upon him. And now he was even putting his mouth to the body so like his own, such was the extent of his rage. And there was to be seen one man suffering injurious treatment, and another forthwith stripping him, and not even covering with earth the body which he denuded of clothing. But, in addition to these, there was another who, robbing others of their marriage rights, wanted to insult his neighbour's wife, and urged her to turn to unlawful embraces, not wishing her husband to be father to a child of his own.

8 After that I began to believe the tragedies, and thought that the dinner of Thyestes had really taken place; and believed in the unlawful lust of Oino-maos, nor doubted of the strife in which brother drew the sword on brother. So, after beholding such things as these, I began to inquire whence they arise, and what is their origin, and who is the author of such devices against men, whence came their discovery, and who is the teacher of them. Now to dare to say that God was the author of these things was impossible; for surely it could not even be said that they have from Him their substance, or their existence. For how were it possible to entertain these thoughts of God? For He is good, and the Creator of what is excellent, and to Him belongs nothing bad. Nay, it is His nature to take no pleasure in such things; but He forbids their production, and rejects those who delight in them, but admits into His presence those who avoid them. And how could it be anything but

absurd to call God the maker of these things of which He disapproves? For He would not wish them not to be, if He had first been their creator; and He wishes those who approach Him to be imitators of Him.

⁹ Wherefore it seemed to me unreasonable to attribute these things to God, or to speak of them as having sprung from Him; though it must certainly be granted that it is possible for something to come into existence out of what has no existence, in case He made what is evil. For He who brought them into existence out of non-existence would not reduce them to the loss of it. And again, it must be said that there was once a time when God took pleasure in evil things, which now is not the case. Wherefore it seems to me impossible to say this of God. For it is unsuitable to His nature to attach this to Him. Wherefore it seemed to me that there is co-existent with Him somewhat which has the name of matter, from which He formed existing things, distinguishing between them with wise art, and arranging them in a fair order, from which also evil things seem to have come into being. For as this matter was without quality or form, and, besides this, was borne about without order, and was untouched by divine art, God bore no grudge against it, nor left it to be continually thus borne about, but began to work upon it, and wished to separate its best parts from its worst, and thus made all that it was fitting for God to make out of it; but so much of it as was like lees, so to speak, this being unfitted for being made into anything, He left as it was, since it was of no use to Him; and from this it seems to me that what is evil has now streamed down among men. This seemed to me the right view to take of these things. But, my friend, if you think that anything I have said is wrong, mention it, for I exceedingly desire to hear about these things.

¹⁰ Orthodoxus. I appreciate your readiness, my friend, and applaud your zeal about the subject; and as for the opinion which you have expressed respecting existing things, to the effect that God made them out of some underlying substance, I do not altogether find fault with it. For, truly, the origin of evil is a subject that has called out opinions from many men. Before you and me, no doubt, there have been many able men who have made the most searching inquiry into the matter. And some of them expressed the same opinion as you did, but others again represented God as the creator of these things, fearing to allow the existence of substance as coeval with Him; while the former, from fear of saying that God was the author of evil, thought fit to represent matter as coeval with Him. And it was the fate of

both of these to fail to speak rightly on the subject, in consequence of their fear of God not being in agreement with an accurate knowledge of the truth.

¹¹ But others declined to inquire about such a question at all, on the ground that such an inquiry is endless. As for me, however, my connection with you in friendship does not allow me to decline the subject of inquiry, especially when you announce your own purpose, that you are not swayed by prejudice,—although you had your opinion about the condition of things derived from your conjectures,—but say that you are confirmed in a desire of knowing the truth. Wherefore I will willingly turn to the discussion of the question. But I wish this companion of mine here to listen to our conversation. For, indeed, he seems to have much the same opinions about these things as you have, wherefore I wish that you should both have a share in the discussion. For whatever I should say to you, situated as you are, I shall say just as much to him. If, then, you are indulgent enough to think I speak truly on this great subject, give an answer to each question I ask; for the result of this will be that you will gain a knowledge of the truth, and I shall not carry on my discussion with you at random.

¹² Valentinian. I am ready to do as you say; and therefore be quite ready to ask those questions from which you think I may be able to gain an accurate knowledge of this important subject. For the object which I have set before myself is not the base one of gaining a victory, but that of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the truth. Wherefore apply yourself to the rest of the discussion. ¹³ Orthodoxus. Well, then, I do not suppose you are ignorant that it is impossible for two uncreated things to exist together, although you seem to have expressed nearly as much as this in an earlier part of the conversation. Assuredly we must of necessity say one of two things: either that God is separate from matter, or, on the other hand, that He is inseparable from it. If, then, one would say that they are united, he will say that that which is uncreated is one only, for each of the things spoken of will be a part of the other; and as they are parts of each other, there will not be two uncreated things, but one composed of different elements. For we do not, because a man has different members, break him up into many beings. But, as the demands of reason require, we say that a single being, man, of many parts, has been created by God. So it is necessary, if God be not separate from matter, to say that that which is uncreated is one only; but if one shall say that He is separ-

ate, there must necessarily be something intermediate between the two, which makes their separation evident. For it is impossible to estimate the distance of one thing from another, unless there be something else with which the distance between them may be compared. And this holds good, not only as far as the instance before us, but also to any number of others.

¹⁴ For the argument which we advanced in the case of two uncreated things would of necessity be of equal force, were the uncreated things granted to be three in number. For I should ask also respecting them, whether they are separate from each other, or, on the other hand, are united each to its neighbour. For if any one resolve to say that they are united, he will be told the same as before; if, again, that they are separate, he will not escape the necessary existence of that which separates them. ¹⁵ If, then, any one were to say that there is a third account which might fitly be given of uncreated things, namely, that neither is God separate from matter, nor, again, are they united as part of a whole; but that God is locally situate in matter, and matter in God, he must be told as the consequence, that if we say that God is placed in matter, we must of necessity say that He is contained within limits, and circumscribed by matter. But then He must, equally with matter, be carried about without order. And that He rests not, nor remains by Himself, is a necessary result of that in which He is being carried, now this way, and now that. And besides this, we must say that God was in worse case still.

¹⁶ For if matter were once without order, and He, determining to change it for the better, put it into order, there was a time when God was in that which had no order. And I might fairly ask this question also, whether God filled matter completely, or existed in some part of it. For if one resolve to say that God was in some part of matter, how far smaller than matter does he make Him; that is, if a part of it contained God altogether. But if he were to say that He is in all of it, and is extended through the whole of matter, he must tell us how He wrought upon it. For we must say that there was a sort of contraction of God, which being effected, He wrought upon that from which He was withdrawn, or else that He wrought in union with matter, without having a place of withdrawal. But if any one say that matter is in God, there is equal need of inquiry, namely, whether it is by His being separated from Himself, and as creatures exist in the air, by His being divided and parted for the reception of the beings that are in Him; or whether it is locally situated, that is to say, as water in land; for if we were to say, as in the air, we

must say that God is divisible; but if, as water in earth,-since matter was without order and arrangement, and besides, contained what was evil,-we must say, that in God were to be found the disorderly and the evil. Now this seems to me an unbecoming conclusion, nay, more a dangerous one. For you wish for the existence of matter, that you may avoid saying that God is the author of evil; and, determining to avoid this, you say that He is the receptacle of evil.

17 If, then, under the supposition that matter is separate from created substances, you had said that it is uncreated, I should have said much about it, to prove that it is impossible for it to be uncreated; but since you say that the question of the origin of evil is the cause of this supposition, it therefore seems to me right to proceed to inquire into this. For when it is clearly stated how evil exists, and that it is not possible to say that God is the cause of evil, because of matter being subject to Him, it seems to me to destroy such a supposition, to remark, that if God created the qualities which did not exist, He equally created the substances. Do you say then, that there co-exists with God matter without qualities out of which He formed the beginning of this world? Valentinian. So I think.

18 Orthodoxus. If, then, matter had no qualities, and the world were produced by God, and qualities exist in the world, then God is the maker of qualities? Valentinian. It is so. Orthodoxus. Now, as I heard you say some time ago that it is impossible for anything to conic into being out of that which has no existence, answer my question: Do you think that the qualities of the world were not produced out of any existing qualities? Valentinian. I do. Orthodoxus. And that they are something distinct from substances? Valentinian. Yes. Orthodoxus. If, then, qualities were neither made by God out of any ready at hand, nor derive their existence from substances, because they are not substances. we must say that they were produced by God out of what had no existence. Wherefore I thought you spoke extravagantly in saying that it was impossible to suppose that anything was produced by God out of what did not exist.

19 But let our discussion of this matter stand thus. For truly we see among ourselves men making things out of what does not exist, although they seem for the most part to be making them with something. As, for instance, we may have an example in the case of architects; for they truly do not make cities out of cities, nor in like manner temples out of temples. But if, because

substances underlie these things, you think that the builders make them out of what does exist, you are mistaken in your calculation. For it is not the substance which makes the city or the temples, but art applied to substance. And this art is not produced out of some art which lies in the substances themselves, but from that which is not in them. ²⁰ But you seem likely to meet me with this argument: that the artificer makes the art which is connected with the substance out of the art which he has. Now I think it is a good reply to this to say, that in man it is not produced from any art lying beneath; for it is not to be granted that substance by itself is art. For art is in the class of accidents, and is one of the things that have an existence only when they are employed about some substance. For man will exist even without the art of building, but it will have no existence unless man be previously in being. Whence we must say that it is in the nature of things for arts to be produced in men out of what has no existence. If, then, we have shown that this is so in the case of men, why was it improper to say that God is able to make not only qualities, but also substances, out of that which has no existence? For as it appears possible for something to be produced out of what exists not, it is evident that this is the case with substances. To return to the question of evil. Do you think evil comes under the head of substances, or of qualities of substances?

²¹ Valentinian. Of qualities. . But matter was found to be without quality or form? Valentinian. It was. Orthodoxus. Well, then, the connection of these names with substance is owing to its accidents. For murder is not a substance, nor is any other evil; but the substance receives a cognate name from putting it into practice. For a man is not (spoken of as) murder, but by committing it he receives the derived name of murderer, without being himself murder; and, to speak concisely, no other evil is a substance; but by practising any evil, it can be called evil. Similarly consider, if you imagine anything else to be the cause of evil to men, that it too is evil by reason of its acting by them, and suggesting the committal of evil. For a man is evil in consequence of his actions. For he is said to be evil, because he is the doer of evil. Now what a man does, is not the man himself, but his activity, and it is from his actions that he receives the title of evil. For if we were to say that he is that which he does, and he commits murders, adulteries, and such-like, he will be all these. Now if he is these, then when they are produced he has an existence, but when they are not, he too ceases to be. Now these things are

produced by men. Men then will be the authors of them, and the causes of their existing or not existing. But if each man is evil in consequence of what he practises, and what he practises has an origin, he also made a beginning in evil, and evil too had a beginning. Now if this is the case, no one is without a beginning in evil, nor are evil things without an origin.

22 Valentinian. Well, my friend, you seem to me to have argued sufficiently against the other side. For you appeared to draw right conclusions from the premises which we granted to the discussion. For truly if matter is without qualities, then God is the maker of qualities; and if evils are qualities, God will be the author of evils. But it seems to me false to say that matter is without qualities; for it cannot be said respecting any substance that it is without qualities. But indeed, in the very act of saying that it is without qualities, you declare that it has a quality, by describing the character of matter, which is a kind of quality. Therefore, if you please, begin the discussion from the beginning; for it seems to me that matter never began to have qualities. For such being the case, I assert, my friend, that evil arises from its emanation.

23 Orthodoxus. If matter were possessed of qualities from eternity, of what will God be the creator? For if we say substances, we speak of them as pre-existing; if, again, we say qualities, these too are declared to have an existence. Since, then, both substances and qualities exist, it seems to me superfluous to call God a creator. But answer me a question. In what way do you say that God was a creator? Was it by changing the existence of those substances into non-existence, or by changing the qualities while He preserved the substances? Valentinian. I think that there was no change of the substances, but only of the qualities; and in respect to these we call God a creator. And just as if one might chance to say that a house was made of stones, it cannot be said of them that they do not still continue stones in substance, because they are called a house; for I affirm that the house is made by the quality of construction. So I think that God, while substance remained, produced a change of its qualities, by reason of which I say that this world was made by God.

24 Orthodoxus. Do you think, too, that evil is among the qualities of substances? Valentinian. I do. Orthodoxus. And were these qualities in matter from the first, or had they a beginning? Valentinian. I say that these qualities were eternally co-existent with matter. Orthodoxus. But do you not say that

God has made a change in the qualities? Valentinian. I do say this. Orthodoxus. For the better? Valentinian. I think so. Orthodoxus. If, then, evil is among the qualities of matter, and its qualities were changed by God for the better, the inquiry must be made whence evil arose. For either all of them, being evil, underwent a change for the better, or some of them being evil, and some not, the evil ones were not changed for the better; but the rest, as far as they were found superior, were changed by God for the sake of order. Valentinian. That is the opinion I held from the beginning.

²⁵ Orthodoxus. How, then, do you say it was that He left the qualities of evil as they were? Was it that He was able to do away with them, or that, though He wished to do so, He was unable? For if you say that He was able, but disinclined to do so, He must be the author of these things; because, while He had power to bring evil to an end, He allowed it to remain as it was, especially when He had begun to work upon matter. For if He had had nothing at all to do with matter, He would not have been the author of what He allowed to remain. But since He works upon a part of it, and leaves a part of it to itself, while He has power to change it for the better, I think He is the author of evil, since He left part of matter in its vileness. He wrought then for the ruin of a part; and, in this respect, it seems to me that this part was chiefly injured by His arranging it in matter, so that it became partaker of evil. For before matter was put in order, it was without the perception of evil; but now each of its parts has the capacity of perceiving evil. Now, take an example in the case of man. Previously to becoming a living creature, he was insensible to evil;

²⁶ but from the time when he is fashioned by God into the form of man, he gains the perception of approaching evil. So this act of God, which you say was done for the benefit of matter, is found to have happened to it rather for the worse. But if you say that God was not able to stop evil, does the impossibility result from His being naturally weak, or from His being overcome by fear, and in subjection to some more powerful being? See which of these you would like to attribute to the almighty and good God. But, again, answer me about matter. Is matter simple or compound? For if matter be simple and uniform, and the universe compound, and composed of different substances, it is impossible to say that it is made of matter, because compound things cannot be composed of one pure and simple ingredient. For composition indicates the mixture of several simple things. But if, on the

other hand, you say that matter is compound, it has been entirely composed of simple elements, and they were once each separately simple, and by their composition matter was produced; for compound things derive their composition from simple things. So there was once a time when matter did not exist—that is to say, before the combination of the simple elements. But if there was once a time when matter did not exist, and there was never a time when what is uncreated did not exist, then matter is not uncreated.

²⁷ And from this it follows that there are many things which are uncreated. For if God were uncreated, and the simple elements of which matter was composed were uncreated, the number of the uncreated would be more than two. But to omit inquiring what are the simple elements, matter or form—for this would be followed by many absurdities—let me ask, do you think that nothing that exists is contrary to itself? ²⁸ Valentinian. I do. Orthodoxus. Yet water is contrary to fire, and darkness to light, and heat to cold, and moisture to dryness. Valentinian. I think it is. Orthodoxus. If, then, nothing that exists is contrary to itself, and these are contrary to one another, they will not be one and the same matter—no, nor formed from one and the same matter. But, again, I wish to ask, do you think that the parts of a thing are not destructive of one another? Valentinian. I do. Orthodoxus. And that fire and water, and the rest likewise, are parts of matter? Valentinian. I hold them to be so. Orthodoxus. Why, then, do you not think that water is destructive of fire, and light of darkness, and so on with the rest? Valentinian. I do. Orthodoxus. Then, if parts of a thing are not destructive of one another, and these are found to be so, they will not be parts of the same thing. But if they are not parts of the same thing, they will not be parts of one and the same matter. And, indeed, they will not be matter either, because nothing that exists is destructive of itself. And this being the case with the contraries, it is shown that they are not matter. This is enough on the subject of matter.

²⁹ Now we must come to the examination of evils, and must necessarily inquire into the evils among men. As to these, are they forms of the principle of evil, or parts of it? If forms, evil will not have a separate existence distinct from them, because the species are to be sought for in the forms, and underlie them. But if this is the case, evil has an origin. For its forms are shown to have an origin—such as murder, and adultery, and the like. But if you will have them to be parts of some principle of evil, and they have an

origin, it also must have an origin. For those things whose parts have an origin, are of necessity originated likewise. For the whole consists of parts. And the whole will not exist if the parts do not, though there may be some parts, even if the whole be not there.

³⁰ Now there is nothing existing of which one part is originated, and another part not. But if I were even to grant this, then there was a time when evil was not complete, namely, before matter was wrought by God. And it attains completeness when man is produced by God; for man is the maker of the parts of evil. And from this it follows that the cause of evil being complete, is God the Creator, which it is impious to say. But if you say that evil is neither of the things supposed, but is the doing of something evil, you declare that it has an origin. For the doing of a thing makes the beginning of its existence. And besides this, you have nothing further to pronounce evil. For what other action have you to point out as such, except what happens among men? Now, it has been already shown that he who acts is not evil according to his being, but in accordance with his evil doing.

³¹ Because there is nothing evil by nature, but it is by use that evil things become such. So I say, says he, that man was made with a free-will, not as if there were already evil in existence, which he had the power of choosing if he wished, but on account of his capacity of obeying or disobeying God. For this was the meaning of the gift of Free Will. And man after his creation receives a commandment from God; and from this at once rises evil, for he does not obey the divine command; and this alone is evil, namely, disobedience, which had a beginning. ³² For man received power, and enslaved himself, not because he was overpowered by the irresistible tendencies of his nature, nor because the capacity with which he was gifted deprived him of what was better for him; for it was for the sake of this that I say he was endowed with it (but he received the power above mentioned), in order that he may obtain an addition to what he already possesses, which accrues to him from the Superior Being in consequence of his obedience, and is demanded as a debt from his Maker. For I say that man was made not for destruction, but for better things. For if he were made as any of the elements, or those things which render a similar service to God, he would cease to receive a reward befitting deliberate choice, and would be like an instrument of the maker; and it would be unreasonable for him to suffer blame for his wrongdoings, for the real author of them is the one by whom he is used. But man

did not understand better things, since he did not know the author (of his existence), but only the object for which he was made. I say therefore that God, purposing thus to honour man, and to grant him an understanding of better things, has given him the power of being able to do what he wishes, and commends the employment of his power for better things;

³³ not that He deprives him again of free-will, but wishes to deprives him again of free-will, but wishes to point out the better way. For the power is present with him, and he receives the commandment; but God exhorts him to turn his power of choice to better things. For as a father exhorts his son, who has power to learn his lessons, to give more attention to them inasmuch as, while he points out this as the better course, he does not deprive his son of the power which he possessed, even if he be not inclined to learn willingly; so I do not think that God, while He urges on man to obey His commands, deprives him of the power of purposing and withholding obedience. For He points out the cause of His giving this advice, in that He does not deprive him of the power. But He gives commands, in order that man may be able to enjoy better things. For this is the consequence of obeying the commands of God. So that He does not give commands in order to take away the power which He has given, but in order that a better gift may be bestowed, as to one worthy of attaining greater things, in return for his having rendered obedience to God, while he had power to withhold it. I say that man was made with free-will, not as if there were already existing same evil, which he had the power of choosing if he wished, ...

³⁴ but that the power of obeying and disobeying God is the only cause.
³⁵ For this was the object to be obtained by free-will. And man after his creation receives a commandment from God, and from this at once rises evil; for he does not obey the divine command, and this alone is evil, namely, disobedience, which had a beginning. For no one has it in his power to say that it is without an origin, when its author had an origin. But you will be sure to ask whence arose this disobedience. It is clearly recorded in Holy Scripture, by which I am enabled to say that man was not made by God in this condition, but that he has come to it by some teaching. For man did not receive such a nature as this. For if it were the case that his nature was such, this would not have come upon him by teaching. Now one says in Holy Writ, that "man has learnt (evil)." I say, then, that disobedience to God is taught. For this alone is evil which is produced in opposition to the purpose of God,

for man would not learn evil by itself. He, then, who teaches evil is the Serpent.

³⁶ For my part, I said that the beginning of evil was envy, and that it arose from man's being distinguished by God with higher honour. Now evil is disobedience to the commandment of God.

On the Distinction between Foods

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

DE CIBIS (ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FOODS)

¹ Text translated into English from Old Slavonic by Ralph Cleminson, commissioned and edited by Roger Pearse, who then released it into the public domain. [Additional Sources: archive.org]

By the same. On the distinction between foods, and on the heifer mentioned in Leviticus, with the ashes of which sinners were sprinkled.

² [I. 1.] We ought finally to have been content with these homilies, the remembrances spoken previously (for they are many), overwhelmed as we are by many temptations, and we have not yet found any deliverance from this. For you know, O Phrenope, having laboured with us and having been a partaker in our work by prayer and fasting, how many trials I had in every homily, how much Satan made me to be ill after I had finished my homily on virginity, how much annoyance he caused me, preventing me from finishing my homily on the resurrection. [2.] He raised up waves (of trouble, I mean) like impassable mountains, so that I despaired even of life, such things were happening to me; and even more the people nowadays – they love slander and abomination and lying, and would rather listen to evil things than good things said about their neighbours.

³ [3.] Nevertheless, even if so many storms of care have encompassed me, I shall not refrain from writing, for this is the common lot of as many as set about declaring the truth. And this has not only arisen now, but has indeed been since the time of the prophets themselves, who were glad to be hated by the evil demons who opposed them. [4.] For the demons strive for nothing so much as to seduce people from their creator and his only-begotten firstborn son Jesus Christ. They oppose the right thoughts of anyone who teaches

people to walk on the road of truth and to imitate better things. They trip up the mind of those who lead people by way of reason to incorruption. For the condemnation and exposure of such doings the way of salvation is to be revealed to men. [5.] Therefore they endeavour that we should be ignorant, and that when people approach both natural and divine knowledge, and are zealous for book-learning, their souls should be caught by foolish urges.

⁴[6.] For when the soul is yet unstable, and has not heard the divine words, and does not know its Creator and Father, it finds itself [the prey] of all kinds of things, and has not seen the good that flows from thence. Otherwise, taking all kinds of other things to be glories which are invented by demons, it strives after foolish imaginings. [II.1] However, whether it is demons or other causes that bring temptations upon us, let us not be afraid, for we have the Lord Jesus Christ for our helper. [2.] For if we receive punishment in this life for the sins which we have committed previously, we should be glad of it, because our judgement there is light; or if we stand firm and courageously against our troubles, like those holy men who were tempted, so that our faith is known. For the one who is untried by God is useless. And so it is right for us to rejoice and glorify God, because he has made us worthy to experience those misfortunes.

⁵[3.] For it is no small prayer of the prophet, when he asks for a sorrowful labour, saying, "Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and mind." And the Apostle Paul says, "Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance." So I think that these cares are profitable. For he would not have said, writing of them, "They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two," etc., and he would not have said, writing to Timothy, "All who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." [4.] For it is good for anyone who is chastised by God not to weaken, lest our spiritual carcasses fall, like those unbelieving people who did not want to follow the angel because the road was hard, and therefore did not enter into the Promised Land. Wretched people, who turned away from God because of hard labour! Therefore they went down to their graves and their carcasses were scattered. [5.] Therefore, then, we should be blameless, nor should anyone separate us because of the labour of the love of wisdom or for any other reason.

⁶[III.1] For it shall be, when it is over, that we shall pass from this life, and having taken no harm from spiritual beasts, shall say, "I waited patiently

for the Lord, and he turned to me, and saved me out of all my troubles.” For it is better to take care first, and rest afterwards. [2.] For a ploughman does not pray that the seeds will come up before he has yoked his oxen and ploughed, but rather expects it to happen after his labour. And if we go to the seamen, we do not admire an inept helmsman, but a skilful one who has delivered his ship from many storms. [3.] For anyone who would taste of the great gifts of God must also accept many afflictions. And at public entertainments all run, but only one receives the prize. “Run in such a way that you may win it,” says Paul, crying out. For there are many obstacles to success, as for a runner there are pits and banks, of which the ignorant and those unfit for the race are afraid, but the knowledgeable and the strong, having endured the perils of the journey, will be saved.

7[4.] For what is the remembrance of that man who loved what is good, and was chaste, and loved his brethren? It is such as endures for all ages. But if you take away from him all his patience, then you take away his being sold by his brethren, and his temptation by that woman, and all his courage and beauty. Likewise with David, if you take away from him his meekness and patience, you take away all his goodness. [5.] And if you take away from Daniel his wisdom, or patience, you take away Bel and the Dragon, and those even more wicked men, and the burning fiery furnace, and many other afflictions. And for what is Moses admirable, if not for his patience? If you take all that away, you diminish his good character. [6.] And you have other spiritual warriors, I mean Elijah, and Jeremiah, and Isaiah, and Elisha, who strove and resisted great persecutors, and their hunger, and their nakedness, and all their labour. And where shall we place the labour of the apostles, who journeyed all over land and sea?

8[IV.1]But having said so much of these things, let us go on to others, understanding very well that we should not be dismayed by the calamities that befell them, but rather receiving the heritage of the word. “Open your mouth to the word of God. [2. Therefore, O Kilonia, beloved and faithful in the Lord, I have a word to you from hence. I rejoice greatly in your true wisdom. For this is true wisdom. Solomon already understood, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This has seemed hard to many, for many trials come upon such people. But this I say, because the brother by whom you sent to me told me all your afflictions and sufferings in the Lord, for the sake of whose name you have received them; [3. for this is the way of those

who thirst for heavenly things and strive to obtain them. For though that way is narrow, it is short, and leads to a great expanse. [4] Thus it is for us, who come to the light, to receive our portion of eternal life, and the unfading crown thereof. For James says, "Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life. "For what shall it profit a man," to speak in Christ's words, "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? [5.

⁹ And, this life being very short and having nothing real, David says of our days that they are "seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble. [6. Therefore choose to suffer with the people of God. The people of God are those who for the sake of receiving the gift of the calling which is from above, have received also many afflictions. Therefore they have not been told (like that rich man) that they have received their good things in this life. [7. And those giants famous from the beginning, that were of so great stature, did not achieve anything by their strength and pride, as Jeremiah the prophet said, "But they were destroyed, because they had no wisdom." ¹⁰ [V.1] But God has given us to know all things that are pleasing to him. "Happy are we," he said, "for things that are pleasing to God are made known to us." It is integrity that is pleasing to God. Integrity is having an undivided mind and not being moved by wicked stormy thoughts. [2.] For all spiritual transgression is a sickness, and a sickness does not combine with good things, as a good thing does, but is healed through the receiving of what is good. Righteousness is health, and unrighteousness is sickness. Therefore the soul is impatient, and the mind by the coming of perils; not having a firm and healthy mind. Therefore also the prophet, urging us to the greatest firmness, said, God has proved us, saying, "You have tried us as silver is tried," and also: "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me." [3.] Therefore let us rather choose to be, according to the Apostle, in "weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities." For the time will come when we who have suffered these things will hear from the Lord, as he said to Job, "Do you think that I have dealt with you in any other way, than that you might appear to be righteous?" Therefore, O Kilonia, let us strive to be partakers in this voice. [4.] This can be shown from gardens also, for gardens are spread with manure so that they may come to magnificence and beauty and bring forth good and sweet fruit; likewise our soul, coming upon trials, grows more to righteousness and all

good character. The same thing is said in the Gospels about the fig tree that did not bear fruit, about which the gardener asked that he might manure it.

¹¹ Why Job sat on the dunghill. [5.] Therefore Job sat on the dunghill during his trials, and sitting there waited for a word from God. Patience under trials is a very great good. For despising all worldly things he sat on the dunghill as if in the emperor's palace. [6.] Truly, O beloved Kilonia, if riches increase do not set your heart on them. For if there come upon us the exhaustion of our possessions, or attacks of sickness, or calumnies, we should stand firm. If we want them to go away, we shall be unable to drive them all off, therefore we had better accept them all with patience. Let us seem to be judged by God rather than condemned with the world. [7.] "Now you," says the Apostle, writing to Timothy, "have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my suffering." I instruct you strongly to know these words, for this admonition is said not to him alone, but to all of us. For he tells us to set our minds on the things that are above.

¹² [VI.1] We have said enough about those who are in afflictions for righteousness' sake; and now we shall talk about what you asked when you sent to me, that is, the dead man who dies in a tent. "This is the law, [2.] when someone dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent, and everyone who is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15 And every open vessel [...] is unclean." And he shall take of the burnt heifer and mix it with water and purify the vessel. "Then a clean person shall take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all the furnishings, on the people who were there [...] And the clean person shall sprinkle the unclean ones on the third day and on the seventh day. [...] Any who are unclean but do not purify themselves, those people shall be cut off from the assembly, for they have defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. Since the water for cleansing has not been dashed on them, they are unclean. It shall be a perpetual statute for them. The one who sprinkles the water for cleansing shall wash his clothes, and whoever touches the water for cleansing shall be unclean."

¹³ [3.] It is to be understood that our Saviour, in establishing this commandment, did not give it to be understood literally, for he said to Peter, "One who has bathed does not need to wash." For it is manifest that he that has purified himself once by being born again will not be defiled by anything that is mentioned in the law (that is, a dead man, or a dead man's

bone, or anything else). For it is not right to wash the outside of the cup and neglect inner, that is, spiritual purity. [4.] And the distinction between foods is abolished not only by the voice from heaven to Peter, saying, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane," but also what the Lord said to his disciples, that not those things that go into a person defile a person, but those things which come out. [5.] For the voice that came to Peter one might also understand of the Gentiles, that God forbids rejecting anyone from the faith, as also the great Peter indicated, when he said, while talking to Cornelius, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean" that comes to the faith.

¹⁴[6.] Therefore not only by this was the distinction between foods abolished, but by what was said by the Lord. And lest we fall into prolixity declaring how the law is abolished in detail, let us reject it entirely as if [we were] sitting with the apostles, for it is wrong, they said, to put upon the necks of believers a yoke which our fathers were not able to bear. ¹⁵[7.] For there had been a question in the church, and those who said that believers should be circumcised. For it is said in the Acts, "The apostles and the elders met together for to consider this matter. And [...] Peter stood up and said to them, 'My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit.'" And soon after James said, "I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood." And shortly afterwards the apostles saw fit to choose certain men and send them to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas and Silas and Judas surnamed Barsabas, and wrote by them thus: "The apostles and elders [...] to the believers [...] in Antioch and Syria [...], greetings. Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you [...] we have decided unanimously to choose representatives[...] and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ." And afterwards: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden

than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”

¹⁶[8.] The commandment of the Holy Spirit and the apostles says that the Gentiles are not to be compelled to keep the law of Moses – looking at the law carnally, as of the washing of vessels and having respect to many other things. [VII.1] But someone will ask, why did God not allow them to eat of other beasts, which other people eat, but commanded them to abstain from them, dividing them into clean and unclean? [2.] For if the vegetarian life is pure and free from wrongdoing, and not thought unrighteous (since we can live on the fruit of the earth), we do not act at all justly, since of old we have done injury to those creatures by slaughtering them for our pleasure. Nor was it enough for us to take our ease at their expense, and enjoy their labours, but after so much service we take them to be slaughtered, and make their harm our pleasure. [3.] And if it is forgiveable to eat animals, since God has created them for our pleasure, why do we not eat those that have no part in our service? But it is rather those that labour for us – the oxen that plough, the cows that give milk, the sheep that adorn us with their wool – that are slaughtered and killed. But if anyone ate a pig, he was reproached and had to be purified.

¹⁷[4.] For whom (I mean, for whose salvation) were these laws given by God? – For God has commanded nothing that is not to our benefit. But [he so commanded in order] that he should show the way of piety to the many, by separating them from the foods of Egypt, and instead leading them to integrity. And as often physicians heal those who are sick with other kinds of food, [5.] this first law was necessary because of the smoke of idolatry, so that they should accept a multitude of customs, and be tried, how diligent they would be in this. For law is compulsion. Those who would not obey God in small things would not obey him in greater things, but those who obeyed in small things would hold the greater. ¹⁸[6.] Therefore he first decreed the law about foods and sacrifices and other simpler things, not unaware that what goes into a man cannot defile him, but rather desiring that our souls should be taught by lesser things, so that they would hold fast to those that were more necessary. As schoolmasters bring children to learning by writing simple characters for them, so God instead of written lines gave the law. He gave it to them so that having learnt it first, they should pass on to higher things – [7.] as Paul also revealed, “[the law] has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities” For a shadow does

not have a true image of things, but an image explains that of which it is the image. So he shows the image of things which are to come by the likeness of things that have already come. As the shadow is to the image, so is the law to the gospel, and as the image is to the things themselves, so is the gospel to the things that are to come. [VIII.1] And since this is how things are, it was necessary that this commandment concerning food should be the shadow of good things to come, which were revealed and purified by the gospel. We should not so much concern ourselves with food, and with which animals have cloven hooves, as with righteousness and with the food of understanding and with works of love towards God.

¹⁹ What is dividing the hoof, and what is chewing the cud? [2.] “Cloven hooves” there are a useful and rational life here; and what elsewhere is “bringing up the cud” is understanding the Scriptures properly, lest understanding them literally we do ourselves harm. [3.] For the law does not only divide beasts into clean and unclean, even if there is much confusion in the dietary regulations. For the pig, in that it does not chew the cud, is unclean, but in that it has a cloven foot, it is clean. And the camel, in that it does not have cloven hooves, is unclean, but in that it chews the cud, it is clean. If in one way they are clean and in one way they are unclean, they are half clean and half unclean. Altogether unclean are those which neither have cloven hooves nor chew the cud; but those that do both (I mean have cloven hooves and chew the cud) are clean. [4.] So the pig is half clean, and the elephant altogether unclean, for it neither chews the cud nor has cloven hooves. The law commands that one should keep away from them, and not touch their bones, or anything dead. So how do they regard those of a half clean beast unclean, while those of a completely unclean beast, that is, the elephant, they do not regard as unclean, but make use of its ivory and its tusks, not keeping the commandments? How does the prophet in the Psalms make a house for Christ out of ivory? “From ivory palaces,” he said, “make you glad; daughters of kings are among your ladies of honour.” But the law had once forbidden to touch the bones of such a beast.

²⁰ How a simple reading of Scripture without understanding is a veil. [5.] Do the scriptures contradict themselves, or do the prophets disagree with the law? But rather the Lord’s books agree among themselves to praise him worthily and to send us into one and the same knowledge and life, and one hope that is to come, if the veil of the scriptures is drawn aside. It is impossible for

it to be drawn aside, unless we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so with an uncovered face we shall know his glory, which is proclaimed in the old books, [6.] not making him a house of ivory and gold (for this is not what the prophet commands). If the Jews are in error about Christ in this way, we know that the Deity takes no pleasure in the dead wiles of human ingenuity, but in those things which are living and never decay.

²¹How the towers are spiritual bodies. [7.] The “towers” are the spiritual bodies, in whom the Lord rejoices, seeing them without sin in the resurrection. Therefore he calls our bodies towers of ivory, which are sanctified with good works as if with ivory, and they shall receive the kingdom, and God is glad of them, as the prophet says, “I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord.” [IX.1] Let us therefore follow the way of the word: light is shone upon the shadow, the law is fulfilled, hope is come near, the truth is revealed, the end of time has come, God has sent his Son to redeem man, who was under the nomos. Not only can the blood and ashes of the heifer and the hyssop purify the unclean, but the whole commandment of the nomos was ordained to that end; for that was not what was awaited, but the Lord Christ. [2.] The hope has come, the gospel is preached, we have learnt greater things. Where now is the purification that was written required? For the law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. But since John, those who think to be purified by the nomos transgress the nomos; for the nomos is washing, and purified by purifications. Since the coming of Christ there are no more ashes of the heifer, for it was not permitted to use the ashes of any other heifer but that prescribed by Moses, nor to omit this mode of purification, nor for anyone who was not purified to go unpunished.

²²[3.] “This is a statute of the law that the Lord has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish and on which no yoke has been laid. You shall give it to the priest Eleazar, and it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence.” And then there is also this law: if a man enter the tent of a man that has died, he shall be unclean, and so shall all that is in that tent, and anyone who touches them is unclean. And he shall take some of the ashes that are made purification, and mix them with water and hyssop, and he shall purify those that are unclean. And then, if anyone becomes unclean and does not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation, because he has de-

filed the holy things of the Lord, because he has not been sprinkled with the water of purification. And this shall be an eternal law for you.

23 [X.1] If the Jews want to live according to the law, none of them ought to take the book of the law into his hands, nor kill the lamb and keep the passover, lest they come under wrath as having defiled the holy things of the Lord. [2.] For it says, if any person becomes unclean and is not purified, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation, because he has not been purified with the water of purification. [3.] It does not say ordinary water, but water that has been mixed with the ashes of the heifer, because that is purification according to the law. For God did not ordain that they should be purified with water only, lest they should boast, but that they should not touch a tomb, nor enter the house of one who had died, nor cross a field of the dead – which is impossible. [4.] Therefore if you set yourself to live according to the law when there are no more ashes left, you have fallen under condemnation; for God has so arranged it, that they should be forced to seek one who would redeem them from the law. “For I say,” said the apostle, “to every man that is circumcised, that he must fulfil the whole nomos.” [5.] The time is past, there is no more ash, it is no longer written on tablets of stone, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, compelling those who are under the law to serve the Lord against their will, but on tablets of flesh for those who would live forever to serve God of their free will.

24 [6.] I would have liked to ask them kindly how they would have us keep the law: as the law itself and the Holy Spirit command us, or as they themselves think it should be kept? If it is as they think, then they command nothing but the breaking of the law. For the nomos is: anyone who has touched a dead bone, or a dead body, if he is not purified, then he shall be cut off from his people lest he touch the holy things. But they, when they have touched dead persons or bones, not only do not purify themselves, but they defile the holy things when they approach them. But if [they say that the law is to be kept] as the Holy Spirit commands, then how are they not the most shameless of all people, [7.] if they tell us to live according to the Spirit, and themselves are seen to do the opposite? “For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.”

25 [XI.1] For the mystery of the heifer is kept in us, who keep the *nomos* not according to the letter, but according to the spirit, not serving the shadow, or the likeness, or the image, but the truth itself according to the truth. [2.] Human weakness invented these signs, in which it placed its ignorance; but it received the truth from others. For it is impossible for humanity, being still separated from the goodness of God because of the deceptions that beset it, to receive the signs of the truth, wherein it should understand the truth. Those whose souls are healthy and can understand the Creator by his heavenly goodness, those need neither signs nor images. But it needed to be shown at first in the law, so that thereby they would become capable also of spiritual things, of which our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us. Those who have tasted the truth shall not worship God in Jerusalem, nor on Mount Gerizim, but in spirit and in truth, lifting up pure hands. [3.] For the holy is not confined in space, nor measured in length of time. By such pure service is the true heifer made manifest, of which she was an image, to show what true purification is. For “See,” he said, “that you make them according to the pattern for them, which is being shown.”

26 How the heifer is the flesh of Christ. 27 [4. “The heifer” is the true flesh of Christ, which he took for the purification of the world. She is called red because of the passion, and without blemish because of his innocence, and without the yoke, because he was free of all sin, and not trained to harness, because he was dispassionate, and outside the camp – outside Jerusalem, in a clean place – he was killed away from any tumult. By her blood the churches are sanctified, by her ashes the people are purified, and by her death all the nations are redeemed from death.[5. For “The Lord,” he says, “is my helper. And Jeremiah says: “my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: Our ancestors have inherited nothing but lies. And for this reason it is burnt (for the scripture says, they shall burn “her skin and her flesh and her blood, with her dung”), [6. because the mysteries are established for the enlightenment and illumination and vivification of those who are taught. Her flesh is holy works, her blood is the word of interpretation, her skin the image and purification of faith which, when we have it, we offer to God. Her dung is the stinking sores of transgression, for he took our infirmities upon him, etc.

28 [7] Hence the law commands us to burn all this, and by this is to be understood the spiritual life, whereby we are to be enlightened by being made

alive in the spirit in our hearts, that we understand nothing dark of him, and as if brought out of the dungeon into God's light on high, as if somehow upon a high mountain, receiving the coming of the Holy Spirit. For as the eye is the light of the body, so is the mind the light of the soul. When you escape the darkness of what is written, you will remain in the light forever. ²⁹ Why they roast the flesh of the lamb and eat it. [XII.1] The flesh of the lamb is not boiled in water, but roasted and eaten. For he forbids it to be eaten raw, or boiled with water; and this saying is about Christ. For he was the perfect lamb: for he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, etc. For when he brings his people out of Egypt, and delivers them from the oppressor, he is a lamb; but when he purifies from sin, he is a heifer without blemish. [2.] Therefore cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet are cast into the midst of the burning, so that we may read in these books which reveal to us by these images, how the scripture shows to us that it is not fitting, when we make enquiry concerning the flesh of Christ, to fail to make reference immediately to the Holy Trinity. For thus is the coming of the Word, holding this faith, and by no means making up opinions of our own about the incarnation of the pre-eternal Word. [3.] The cedar wood, because it does not rot, and is evergreen, we take to indicate the Father, who possesses incorruptibility and immortality. We take the hyssop as a symbol of the coming of the only-begotten Son, for he came for our healing and salvation, for this herb helps against the wasting away of the body, and our Lord Jesus Christ brought us to life when we had dried up and withered away, and brought us back to our original honour. We say that the scarlet denotes the communion of the Holy Spirit, because of whom our souls will bear a good token, and his gifts shine forth from our bodies. [4.] And this is an image of the Trinity made of those things thrown into the burning of the heifer.

³⁰ [5.] And that there are two persons indicates that there are two lives, the pure and the murky, and that the choice of the good life requires help, [showing] by these signs that when one is enlightened, his soul immediately receives renewal, whereby it is all cleansed of sin. [6.] And the ash that is sprinkled on those who are defiled reveals on the one hand the burial of the body of Christ, how he entered into the dust of the earth for our sake, and on the other symbolises repentance from sins, for while Christ was not yet come, they purified themselves with ashes. And why did the scriptures call Christ's death the dust of death and ashes? Because now they are purified by

being baptised into Christ's death, which washes the wounds which we have sustained through transgressions. Those who "were baptised into Christ," says the apostle, "were baptised into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism," etc.

³¹[7.] Why then do the scriptures call Christ's death dust and ashes? Because Christ underwent his passion not in the imagination, but in reality, having taken our flesh unchanged, and tasted death, like us, in truth. Thus they who have believed in him, but do not say that he really underwent his passion for us, are still in their sins. [8.] Therefore the people were not commanded to use the ashes of a second heifer, if there was no more of the first, that it should be clearly manifest, that Christ died for our sake, he died for the salvation of the world. And, says the apostle, "will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God," having brought the flesh into eternal life. [XIII.1] What else does it say? For the rest should also be seen. And this is the law: if a man die in a tent, anyone who enters the tent is unclean, as is everything that is there. He does not speak of death in general, but of spiritual death – for the soul also dies, and not for a time, but eternally. As the prophet says, "The soul that sins, it shall die." [2.] This is real death, that is, the death of sin. For the beauty of the soul, and its covering, and its adornment, is a good life according to the scriptures. "The wise woman," he says, "builds her house." Likewise the Lord commands each of us to build our houses by good living, like the work of the wise man who built his house upon the rock. He calls himself the rock, and the stronghold of faith the house.

³²[3.] For if a man dies in spiritual death, and you enter his house, that is to say, his way of life and his works, you have immediately defiled your conscience and darkened your mind. However, if you repent before the evil can fester in your soul and body, you will come and purify yourself with the holy body. [4.] Every vessel that is open, and has no cover tied on it, is unclean. But every soul that is tied up with bonds of love and bound around, cannot receive that defilement. But that which is open through weakness, and does not bear the seal of Christ upon it, is defiled by the wiles of the Devil. Thus Jeremiah told the people, saying, "For death has come in through their doors." He calls their senses doors. ³³[5.] If therefore they want to obey the words of the law concerning those who have died, how in reality one who

has touched a dead man should be unclean, then let us say what sort of a likeness that was, that those who had touched a dead person should be in defilement. How is it that we consider dead bodies unclean – as not going to die ourselves, or as going to die? If as not going to die, then we shall say nothing. But if as going to die, it is impossible for anyone not to taste death. What is this absurdity, to abhor dying bodies, as if we were not going to be just like them? For both the dying and the dead are more honourable than we (if they are not afflicted with sins), for they have escaped the occasion of sin. “For whoever has died,” he said, “is freed from sin.” [6.] If it were not clean, would the Lord wish to raise it up and grant it the Kingdom of Heaven? The Lord spoke concerning the resurrection of the dead, as he spoke to Moses, “He is not a God of the dead, but of the living.” If he is a God of the living, the bodies that have left this life are alive, in that they have the hope of resurrection; therefore they are not unclean, for God takes care of them. [7.] Or how did the bones of Joseph not defile those who approached them? For all the people went with them.

³⁴ [XIV.1] And anyone who crosses a field of the dead, or touches a dead body, or a human bone, or a grave, shall be unclean. [2.] What is a field of the dead? The “field of the dead” is the mentality of self-indulgence, which has hurt many, and has undone countless numbers by bringing them imaginary pleasures. And the wise [son of] Sirach prayed that he might avoid this snare: “O Lord, Father and Governor of all my whole life, leave me not to their counsels. [...] Let not the greediness of the belly nor lust of the flesh take hold of me.” For blessed indeed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has gone round far off from wicked works. [3.] Or the bone of a dead man or the grave of a dead man. The bone means those who have abandoned the faith, and are not members of the church, but are cut off, and dead, and have lost all movement of life, and are separated from the most holy head, Our Lord, on whom the whole body depends, and being put together grows into a holy temple to the Lord. [4.] The “grave” and the “tomb” are hypocrites, and because they are fair on the outside but evil on the inside, the Lord compared them to whitewashed tombs.

³⁵ [5.] The *nomos* commands that anyone who has touched this sort of wickedness should be purified. For it is good for those who have sinned in small things to purify themselves quickly, before they descend to the depths of evil. [6.] The seventh day, on which the unclean person is declared clean, is

the distance from sin to confession, the time not having come for their complete pilgrimage. For if these seven days were longer than their pilgrimage, then, the times coming to an end, they would find no place for repentance. And on the seventh day, that is, at the end of life, he should be found clean. [7.] The ashes symbolise humility, as David said, “a humbled heart God will not despise.” And the Ninevites also repented with sackcloth and ashes. Likewise also Esther filled her head and ashes and dung, when she prayed to the Lord for her fellow-countrymen. Likewise Abraham said to the Lord, “I am dust and ashes.” And it says in the hundred and first Psalm, “I eat ashes like bread, and mingle tears with my drink,” showing great humility, offered wholeheartedly. And he also says, “O give thanks to the Lord; for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever.”

³⁶ [XV.1] These are the true purifications of those who fear God, and these are the sprinklings which are accomplished by the Body of Christ, whereby not only bodies, but souls also are cleansed, better than by the blood of a heifer or the other purifications of the nomos. For the blood of Christ, says the apostle, will purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, to whom be glory now and forever and unto ages of ages, Amen.

On Life and Rational Action

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

DE VITA ET ACTIBUS RATIONI CONSENTANEIS (ON LIFE AND RATIONAL ACTION)

¹ Text translated into English from Old Slavonic by Ralph Cleminson, commissioned and edited by Roger Pearse, who then released it into the public domain. [Additional Sources: archive.org]

The Second Homily, by the same. On Life and Rational Action.

² [I. 1.] Many persons are surprised at the changes in life, or how they pass from abundance of sustenance to worse things. For such people, because of love for the things they have lost, and because of the diminishing of those things which are needful, not having learnt to humble themselves to worse things, often rail unreasonably even at Providence. [2.] But I say, since we are men, and have dominion over those things which were created for us, let us not show ourselves to be worse than those things that were created for us: neither being exalted with a multitude of riches, nor, on the contrary, being impatient with the little that we have now. For it is foolish to become enslaved to those things over which we have received dominion. [3.] For the sake of abstinence even those who are rich often regard their abundance as very little, while the poor regard these things as nothing. And many, who have the things of this world as if they had not the things of this world, are greater. [4.] For if there were any benefit in material things, people would indeed have an excuse; but if there is none at all, how is it possible to hinder the mind of God? They labour in vain who do not accept the things that befall them, and they do not understand that they cast themselves into worse evils, and receive punishment from God for their insubordination. Before

that further punishment they beat themselves, ending by poisoning themselves with care.

³[5.] Life, which is unstable and swift to change human works, knows no good things. Either we have learnt by experience or we have seen those who suffer: [6.] its transformations are many, and its changes from one condition to another – sometimes the lesser are raised up, sometimes the greater are ruined. By the greater an untroubled condition is only to be touched, even if the head is bowed down. [7.] But our rising up wilfully... Knowing that those who by reason of weakness did not want to receive it shall receive worse loss, [II.1.] how shall he who resisted it, and the things that are pleasing to God, think himself unfit for eternal death? [2.] Thus a mariner obeys the helmsman, and a soldier obeys the general, and an ox bears the yoke, and a horse is restrained by the bridle, and other beasts, according to the law that is for them, obey and submit to the one who drives them. [3.] So how shall man, who is above them all, not obey God? He is glad to receive heavenly things, and does what is commanded promptly, and rejoices in the command, because he had been fit for God's commandment.

⁴[4.] But what sort of men are we, bearing a burden of filth which besets us? When we see those things that are necessary, we are glad only of those which give us pleasure, thinking that this is good; thereby we take delight also in fair deceits, and imagine that only these are of use to us. [5.] But God, who created us and made us, as he desires man not to be saved just by being given things, does not bestow on men as much pleasure as they can enjoy (the end of which would be death). [6.] Over-abundant feeding and rich food weaken a man, and those who have made themselves weaker through much feeding are unfit for obedience to the commands of God. ⁵[III.1] But how much firmer will a man be made by many labours of the body! He will obtain a healthier soul through his labours and hard living. He has brought these things upon men, whereby he thinks willingly to prepare the human mind for that which is high and lovely. [2.] For it is better for them who have lived through hard times to enjoy eternal good things afterwards, than, having enjoyed pleasure for a short time, to fall into unending alien torment. For sorrow is beneficial, and those things that give pleasure do harm. For I think that there is no one who does not know what learning is like for children, and that it is hard to make them remain at their studies. [3.] How is it not manifest that virtue shows itself at the very beginning of the labours

that have been before, and not by the experience of useful things, nor by the knowledge of good things to come? Those who have suffered will receive the fruit of these sweet things. [4.] Nor do those who are undergoing treatment in the body, even if they suffer more, demand immediate health, but in the hope of future deliverance accept useful pains. [5.] An athlete is trained by time, and schooled in painful labours from his youth up, and he spreads his table with hardship, and takes food which is distasteful to him, avoiding sweet things, and is fed by what he takes no delight in, that by the rules he obeys he may crown his fatherland.

6[6.] These things are done in small things, and are seen by all. They understand the organisation of ordinary life. But each of the things we have spoken of invisibly creates future benefits by means of painful efforts. For they are not soon known to man, and so the good things which are not yet come are invisible to us who believe in the one who knows them. We should speak such things and pray that they should be, [7.] for so we have learnt. Whereby it is pleasing to him, so it should be useful to us, knowing and being firmly assured that the changes in life are useful to us, [8.] or changed by him into useful things, even if they do not immediately appear so. Again, there are often those who themselves change their requirements, being in poverty or riches. He who is the constant in all things is revealed by life. [9.] For as many as adhere to a single way of life, maintaining their habit unchanged to the end, such people as have soon left everything, after their departure have been altogether the same, only they have a different life elsewhere, hiding earthly things in the heavens.

7[IV.1] If there be anything else, let those who are deprived not be dismayed at the change. For it is fitting to hear this law. For whatever there is shows itself after it has been. Do you not see the changing seasons of the many days of the year? [2. Behold the winter, which is unbearable for many, but is necessary for life, for it gives food and drink to the earth, and having distressed man by the sadness of nature, it shortly reveals its benefits by the coming of the wind, and brings forth for man the many different fruits with which the earth is crowned. [4. Many flee the heat of the sun, but it ripens our food. Often the rains distress us, but they serve the earth for drink. Let the harvest too pass, and let winter be near. Let autumn display a dissolution from the mixing of the two, to the decay of the fruits. [4. Let the sun also change the wind, which blows elsewhere. Behold, O man, the moon itself, in

what manner it wanes and is impoverished, and waxes again and is enriched. [5. We see also the nature of the stars, with which the sky is crowned, how they also have received their own lot, and we observe their movements, how by different habits and in changeable manners they approach each other, so that even those that rejoice in the heavens are to be constant within a single circle, [6.

8as they say, nor are they to be immobile, like the axis, but go round within the circle that contains them; but they are inseparable, as they say, for the sake of constancy. [7. Let us, again, consider the manner of being of the springs, how they too do not remain in their places, but pour out many waters, as they do not care to remain in the place where they were, but pass through many, and are seen by themselves, and fed by mixing with each other, pour forth many mighty rivers. 9[V.1]These are the operations and changes of the nature of created things. Therefore you also, O man, be either rich or poor, or a king. Do not love a changeless existence, but change it, and look to the next world. [And consider] a multitude of people, so as to see clearly and understand wisdom: [2.] there you shall see many changes in many persons, who turn about and change their way of life. There you shall see many rising from a humble condition and falling from greatness. [3.] Such are the mysteries of our life. Such are the laws that the Deity has laid down for man, moving him from place to place and from way of life to way of life as he desires for each individual, so it becomes us to obey, to follow and not to resist.

10[4.] Therefore, O man, the image of God, creature of God, do not repine under him, nor make his commandment a hardship, and do not disobey when you are chastised, for it is in love that he chastises you. Some are chastised as having already sinned, and some so that they may not sin. [5.] But if you approach the sea, do not be afraid of its threatening aspect, for here also will you find the footsteps of God, wherein one may follow without fear, believing in the true way by water, and by spirit, and by the tree. [6] The fall of a kingdom is sorrowful indeed for those who experience it or those who hear of it; for whatever pleasure they have received to enjoy, when they are in want they will experience very great sorrow, being deprived of it. [7.] But forasmuch as these things have not happened without God, instead of worrying about them one should rather seek their cause, so as to understand the good that will come of it. For he who desires to learn from what he en-

dures will understand how to receive the will of God from him and be forgiven.

¹¹[VI.1] Understand therefore, O man, if you think yourself deprived of anything, that it was not eternal but transient, a thing wanted but not a thing possessed. [2.] Those who would grasp the things of this world as if they were things eternal shall receive neither, but be deprived of all. For these, even if they receive them, disappear and perish like a shadow; while those remain for ever, as really existing. And let the nature of what happens be understood from the thing itself: [3.] for it it (if it?) does not fall, it is eternal; but if it does fall, it has come to nought. How is it not transient! It is like a dream that appears in the night time only, the imaginary nature of which is revealed when the day comes. [4.] It remains for those who have despaired of imaginary things to ask for those which are to come, and when they have loved to acquire them, and asked for them, they shall receive them. [5.] For the imaginary good things here are the image of the true ones. Therefore having flourished for a little while, they shall immediately fade, and only the word of God shall abide for ever. For the kingdom is not divided, that the voice of God shall come true here also. [6.] Let us take off the purple robe, and cast aside crimson raiment, for it does not satisfy the thirsty soul, and let us avoid many great storehouses full of all kinds of fruit, for by this the soul was never made free. But though we gain the whole world, we have no profit if we lose our soul. It is enough: enough is humble food, lest, if I grow rich, I forget the Lord.

¹²[VII.1] These are the teachings of God, in these ways Our Lord walked. Do you not see that he himself, who fills the heavens and the earth, did not love fleeting things, but left them in his salutary departure, and he first showed us the well conducted life, and what is necessary. [2.] (When he said “he put off”, instead of this it means that he did not require divine power during the time of his pilgrimage; and “he put on” means that he required human poverty and humility.) ¹³For he put off God and put on man. Among us he was among the poor, and did not care for the rich, but imitated the poor and called them blessed, and promised immortal and genuine riches and a kingdom that shall not fail, and said that those who are rich now shall have their reward taken away from them, because they have loved this temporary sustenance instead of that which is eternal. [3.] Let us strive therefore to have it, despising the things of this present world, for they pass

like a shadow, and loving those which are to come, for they shall remain, and no one shall take them away, for they are God's gift, and immortal. [4.] It is necessary for those who would hold onto those good things to despise those imaginary good things that are here. The Lord too renounced his possession of them, and what he himself had made he ceded to another (that is, to the devil), and he allowed his temporal power to the evil spirit and to men. [5.] Therefore these things are not to be held onto, because they are the possessions of such a lord, and he gives to whom he will: he gives to his own, who understand all his ways and, imagining him to be the lord, worship him. [6.] But it behoves us, if we have chosen to follow God, to renounce the broad and extensive [road], for it is the way of death, and cross over to the narrow and hard one, for it leads to life. [7.] If you are deprived of possessions by acquisition, by poverty, you shall receive, instead of one thing [another]. If you have lost any of your loved ones, they are not lost to you, for those of whom you have been deprived for a short while you will have for ever.

¹⁴ [VIII.1] Behold that man, the preacher of the coming of the Holy One, who was sent into the world for a short time, and abode here scarce for a while, and set little store by any of the things that are here. For he fed upon locusts and wild honey, and was clad in camel's hair, and proved greater than all that have been born, because of his simple raiment, and unsophisticated food, and meagre victuals. [2.] Behold also that poor widow, whose entire possessions were two copper mites, which she did not spare, and who was greater in her giving than many rich people. [3.] If any would fulfil the heavenly commandments, and follow the law of salvation to the end, he will find many occasions for the care that is here – be it to refrain from marriage when nature commands and allows it, or having two coats, promising one to the poor and naked, or not neglecting those who are in need of food, or serving the thirsty, though it be but with cold water, or receiving one who has no roof or shelter into his house, or attaching his soul to the prison, or serving the sick.

¹⁵ [4.] Thus he shall be numbered among those on the judge's right hand, he shall be honoured as a king, he shall be called like a son of God, and he shall live in the unknown world, and be nourished with the riches of God, which cannot be reckoned in time.

From the Discourse on the Resurrection

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

PART I.

1 I. God did not make evil, nor is He at all in any way the author of evil; but whatever failed to keep the law, which He in all justice ordained, after being made by Him with the faculty of free-will, for the purpose of guarding and keeping it, is called evil. Now it is the gravest fault to disobey God, by overstepping the bounds of that righteousness which is consistent with free-will.

II. Now the question has already been raised, and answered, that the "coats of skins" are not bodies. Nevertheless, let us speak of it again, for it is not enough to have mentioned it once. Before the preparation of these coats of skins, the first man himself acknowledges that he has both bones and flesh; for when he saw the woman brought to him: "This is now," he cried, "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." And again: She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. For this cause shall unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." For I cannot endure the trifling of some who shamelessly do violence to Scripture, in order that their opinion, that the resurrection is without flesh, may find support; supposing rational bones and flesh, and in different ways changing it backwards and forwards by allegorizing. And Christ confirms the taking of these things as they are written, when, to the question of the Pharisees about putting away a wife, He answers: "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father," and so on.

2 III. But it is evidently absurd to think that the body will not co-exist with the soul in the eternal state, because it is a bond and fetters; in order that, according to their view, we who are to live in the kingdom of light may not be for ever condemned to be bondmen of corruption. For as the

question has been sufficiently solved, and the statement refitted in which they defined the flesh to be the soul's chain, the argument also is destroyed, that the flesh will not rise again, lest, if we resume it, we be prisoners in the kingdom of light. IV. In order, then, that man might not be an undying or ever-living evil, as would have been the case if sin were dominant within him, as it had sprung up in an immortal body, and was provided with immortal sustenance, God for this cause pronounced him mortal, and clothed him with mortality. For this is what was meant by the coats of skins, in order that, by the dissolution of the body, sin might be altogether destroyed from the very roots, that there might not be left even the smallest particle of root from which new shoots of sin might again burst forth.

3 V. For as a fig-tree, which has grown in the splendid buildings of a temple, and has reached a great size, and is spread over all the joints of the stones with thickly-branching roots, ceases not to grow, till, by the loosening of the stones from the place in which it sprung up, it is altogether torn away; for it is possible for the stones to be fitted into their own places, when the fig tree is taken away, so that the temple may be preserved, having no longer to support what was the cause of its own destruction; while the fig-tree, torn away by the roots, dies; in the same way also, God, the builder, checked by the seasonable application of death, His own temple, man, when he had fostered sin, like a wild fig-tree, "killing," in the words of Scripture, "and making alive," in order that the flesh, after sin is withered and dead, may, like a restored temple, be raised up again with the same parts, uninjured and immortal, while sin is utterly and entirely destroyed. For while the body still lives, before it has passed through death, sin must also live with it, as it has its roots concealed within us even though it be externally checked by the wounds inflicted by corrections and warnings; since, otherwise, it would not happen that we do wrong after baptism, as we should be entirely and absolutely free from sin.

4 But now, even after believing, and after the time of being touched by the water of sanctification, we are oftentimes found in sin. For no one can boast of being so free from sin as not even to have an evil thought. So that it is come to pass that sin is now restrained and lulled to sleep by faith, so that it does not produce injurious fruits, but yet is not torn up by the roots. For the present we restrain its sprouts, such as evil imaginations, "test any root of bitterness springing up trouble" us, not suffering its leaves to unclothe and

open into shoots; while the Word, like an axe, cuts at its roots which grow below. But hereafter the very thought of evil will disappear. 5 VI. But come now, since there is need of many examples in matters of this kind, let us examine them particularly from this point of view, without desisting till our argument ends in clearer explanation and proof. It appears, then, as if an eminent craftsman were to cast over again a noble image, wrought by himself of gold or other material, and beautifully proportioned in all its members, upon his suddenly perceiving that it had been mutilated by some infamous man, who, too envious to endure the image being beautiful, spoiled it, and thus enjoyed the empty pleasure of indulged jealousy. For take notice, most wise Aglaophon, that, if the artificer wish that that upon which he has bestowed so much pains and care and labour, shall be quite free from injury, he will be impelled to melt it down, and restore it to its former condition. But if he should not cast it afresh, nor reconstruct it, but allow it to remain as it is, repairing and restoring it, it must be that the image, being passed through the fire and forged, cannot any longer be preserved unchanged, but will be altered and wasted.

6 Wherefore, if he should wish it to be perfectly beautiful and faultless, it must be broken up and recast, in order that all the disfigurements and mutilations inflicted upon it by treachery and envy, may be got rid of by the breaking up and recasting of it, while the image is restored again uninjured and unalloyed to the same form as before, and made as like itself as possible. For it is impossible for an image under the hands of the original artist to be lost, even if it be melted down again, for it may be restored; but it is possible for blemishes and injuries to be put off, for they melt away and cannot be restored; because in every work of art the best craftsman looks not for blemish or failure, but for symmetry and correctness in his work. Now God's plan seems to me to have been the same as that which prevails among ourselves. For seeing man, His fairest work, corrupted by envious treachery, He could not endure, with His love for man to leave him in such a condition, lest he should be for ever faulty, and bear the blame to eternity; but dissolved him again into his original materials, in order that, by remodelling, all the blemishes in him might waste, away and disappear. For the melting down of the statue in the former case corresponds to the death and dissolution of the body in the latter, and the remoulding of the material in the former, to the resurrection after death in the latter;

7 as also saith the prophet Jeremiah, for he addresses the Jews in these words, "And I went down to the potter's house; and, behold, he wrought a work upon the stones. And the vessel which he made in his hands was broken; and again he made another vessel, as it pleased him to make it. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Cannot I do to you as this potter, O house of Israel? Behold, as the clay of the potter are ye in my hands." 8 VII. For I call your attention to this, that, as I said, after man's transgression the Great Hand was not content to leave as a trophy of victory its own work, debased by the Evil One, who wickedly injured it from motives of envy; but moistened and reduced it to clay, as a potter breaks up a vessel, that by the remodelling of it all the blemishes and bruises in it may disappear, and it may be made afresh faultless and pleasing.

9 VIII. But it is not satisfactory to say that the universe will be utterly destroyed, and sea and air and sky will be no longer. For the whole world will be deluged with fire from heaven, and burnt for the purpose of purification and renewal; it will not, however, come to complete ruin and corruption. For if it were better for the world not to be than to be, why did God, in making the world, take the worse course? But God did not work in vain, or do that which was worst. God therefore ordered the creation with a view to its existence and continuance, as also the Book of Wisdom confirms, saying, "For God created all things that they might have their being; and the generations of the world were healthful, and there is no poison of destruction in them. And Paul clearly testifies this, saying, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that subjected the same in hope: because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, he says, and he expects that it will be set free from such servitude, as he intends to call this world by the name of creation. For it is not what is unseen but what is seen that is subject to corruption.

10 The creation, then, after being restored to a better and more seemly state, remains, rejoicing and exulting over the children of God at the resurrection; for whose sake it now groans and travails, waiting itself also for our redemption from the corruption of the body, that, when we have risen and shaken off the mortality of the flesh, according to that which is written,

"Shake off the dust, and arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem," and have been set free from sin, it also shall be freed from corruption and be subject no longer to vanity, but to righteousness. Isaiah says, too, "For as the new heaven and the new earth which I make, remaineth before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name be; " and again, "Thus saith the Lord that created the heaven, it is He who prepared the earth and created it, He determined it; He created it not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. For in reality God did not establish the universe in vain, or to no purpose but destruction, as those weak-minded men say, but to exist, and be inhabited, and continue. Wherefore the earth and the heaven must exist again after the conflagration and shaking of all things.

¹¹ IX. But if our opponents say, How then is it, if the universe be not destroyed, that the Lord says that "heaven and earth shall pass away; " and the prophet, that "the heaven shall perish as smoke, and the earth shall grow old as a garment; " we answer, because it is usual for the Scriptures to call the change of the world from its present condition to a better and more glorious one, destruction; as its earlier form is lost in the change of all things to a state of greater splendour; for there is no contradiction nor absurdity in the Holy Scriptures. For not "the world" but the "fashion of this world" passeth away, it is said; so it is usual for the Scriptures to call the change from an earlier form to a better and more comely state, destruction; just as when one calls by the name of destruction the change from a childish form into a perfect man, as the stature of the child is turned into manly size and beauty. We may expect that the creation will pass away, as if it were to perish in the burning, in order that it may be renewed, not however that it will be destroyed, that we who are renewed may dwell in a renewed world without taste of sorrow; according as it is said, "When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth, they shall be made, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth;

¹² " God henceforth providing for the due temperature of that which surrounds it. For as the earth is to exist after the present age, there must be by all means inhabitants for it, who shall no longer be liable to death, nor shall marry, nor beget children, but live in all happiness, like the angels, without change or decay. Wherefore it is silly to discuss in what way of life our bodies will then exist, if there is no longer air, nor earth, nor anything else. ¹³ X. But in addition to what has been said, there is this point worth consideration, since it misleads very much, if we may be outspoken about matters of

such importance, Aglaophon For you said that the Lord declared plainly that those who shall obtain the resurrection shall then be as the angels. You brought this objection: The angels, being without flesh, are on this account in the utmost happiness and glory. We must then, as we are to be made equal to the angels, be like them stripped of flesh, and be angels. But you overlooked this, my excellent friend, that He who created and set in order the universe out of nothing, ordained the nature of immortal beings to be distributed not only among angels and ministers, but also among principalities, and thrones, and powers. For the race of angels is one, and that of principalities and powers another; because immortal beings are not all of one order, and constitution, and tribe, and family, but there are differences of race and tribe. And neither do the cherubim, departing from their own nature, assume the form of angels; nor, again, do angels assume the form of the others. For they cannot be anything but what they are and have been made. Moreover, man also having been appointed by the original order of things to inhabit the world, and to rule over all that is in it, when he is immortal, will never be changed from being a man into the form either of angels or any other;

¹⁴ for neither do angels undergo a change from their original form to another. For Christ at His coming did not proclaim that the human nature should, when it is immortal, be remoulded or transformed into another nature, but into what it was before the fall. For each one among created things must remain in its own proper place, that none may be wanting to any, but all may be full: heaven of angels, thrones of powers, luminaries of ministers; and the more divine spots, and the undefiled and untainted luminaries, with seraphim, who attend the Supreme Council, and uphold the universe; and the world of men. For if we granted that men are changed into angels, it would follow that we say that angels also are changed into powers, and these into one thing and the other, until our argument proceed too far for safety. ¹⁵ XI. Neither did God, as if He had made man badly, or committed a mistake in the formation of him, determine afterwards to make an angel, repenting of His work, as the worst of craftsmen do; nor did He fashion man, after He had wished originally to make an angel, and failed; for this would be a sign of weakness, etc. Why even then did He make man and not angels, if He wished men to be angels and not men? Was it because He was unable? It is blasphemy to suppose so. Or was He so busy in making the worse

as to loiter about the better? This too is absurd. For He does not fail in making what is good, nor defers it, nor is incapable of it; but He has the power to act how and when He pleases, inasmuch as He is Himself power. Wherefore it was because He intended man to be man, that He originally made him so. But if He so intended—since He intends what is good—man is good. Now man is said to be composed of soul and body; he cannot then exist without a body, but with a body, unless there be produced another man besides man. For all the orders of immortal beings must be preserved by God, and among these is man. "For," says the Book of Wisdom, "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity." The body then perishes not; for man is composed of soul and body.

16 XII. Wherefore observe that these are the very things which the Lord wished to teach to the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the flesh. For this was the opinion of the Sadducees. Whence it was that, having contrived the parable about the woman and the seven brethren, that they might cast doubt upon the resurrection of the flesh, "There came to Him," it is said, "the Sadducees also, who say that there is no resurrection. Christ, then, if there had been no resurrection of the flesh, but the soul only were saved, would have agreed, with their opinion as a right and excellent one. But as it was, He answered and said, "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven," not on account of having no flesh, but of not marrying nor being married, but being henceforth incorruptible. And He speaks of our being near the angels in this respect, that as the angels in heaven, so we also in paradise, spend our time no more in marriage-feasts or other festivities. but in seeing God and cultivating life, under the direction of Christ. For He did not say "they shall be angels," but like angels, in being, for instance, crowned, as it is written, with glory and honour; differing a little from the angels, while near to being angels. Just as if He had said.

17 while observing the fair order of the sky, and the stillness of the night, and everything illumined by the heavenly light of the moon, "the moon shines like the sun. We should not then say that He asserted that the moon was absolutely the sun, but like the sun. As also that which is not gold, but approaching the nature of gold, is said not to be gold, but to be like gold. But if it were gold, it would be said to be, and not to be like, gold. But since it is not gold, but approaching to the nature of it, and has the appearance of

it, it is said to be like gold; so also when He says that the saints shall. in the resurrection be like the angels, we do not understand Him to assert that they will then be actually angels, but approaching to the condition of angels. So that it is most unreasonable to say, "Since Christ declared that the saints in the resurrection appear as angels, therefore their bodies do not rise," although the very words employed give a clear proof of the real state of the case. For the term "resurrection" is not applied to that which has not fallen, but to that which has fallen and rises again; as when the prophet says, "I will also raise up again the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. Now the much-desired tabernacle of the soul is fallen, and sunk down into "the dust of the earth.

¹⁸ For it is not that which is not dead, but that which is dead, that is laid down. But it is the flesh which dies; the soul is immortal. So, then, if the soul be immortal, and the body be the corpse, those who say that there is a resurrection, but not of the flesh, deny any resurrection; because it is not that which remains standing, but that which has fallen and been laid down, that is set up; according to that which is written, "Does not he who falls rise again, and he who turns aside return?" ¹⁹ XIII. Since flesh was made to border on incorruption and corruption, being itself neither the one nor the other, and was overcome by corruption for the sake of pleasure, though it was the work and property of incorruption; therefore it became corruptible, and was laid in the dust of the earth. When, then, it was overcome by corruption, and delivered over to death through disobedience, God did not leave it to corruption. to be triumphed over as an inheritance; but, after conquering death by the resurrection, delivered it again to incorruption, in order that corruption might not receive the property of incorruption, but. incorruption that of corruption. Therefore the apostle answers thus, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Now the corruptible and mortal putting on immortality, what else is it but that which is "sown in corruption and raised in incorruption," -for the soul is not corruptible or mortal; but this which is mortal and corrupting is of flesh,-in order that, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly?" For the image of the earthy which we have borne is this, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. But the image of the heavenly is the resurrection from the dead, and incorruption, in order that "as

Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.

20 But if any one were to think that the earthy image is the flesh itself, but the heavenly image some other spiritual body besides the flesh; let him first consider that Christ, the heavenly man, when He appeared, bore the same form of limbs and the same image of flesh as ours, through which also He, who was not man, became man, that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. For if He bore flesh for any other reason than that of setting the flesh free, and raising it up, why did He bear flesh superfluously, as He purposed neither to save it, nor to raise it up? But the Son of God does nothing superfluously. He did not then take the form of a servant uselessly, but to raise it up and save it. For He truly was made man, and died, and not in mere appearance, but that He might truly be shown to be the first begotten from the dead, changing the earthy into the heavenly, and the mortal into the immortal. When, then, Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he does not give a disparaging opinion of the regeneration of the flesh, but would teach that the kingdom of God, which is eternal life, is not possessed by the body, but the body by the life. For if the kingdom of God, which is life, were possessed by the body, it would happen that the life would be consumed by corruption.

21 But now the life possesses what is dying, in order that "death may be swallowed up in victory" by life, and the corruptible may be seen to be the possession of incorruption and immortality, while it becomes unbound and free from death and sin, but the slave and servant of immortality; so that the body may be the possession of incorruption, and not incorruption that of the body. 22 XIV. If, then, out of such a drop, small, and previously without any existence, in its actual state of moistness, contractedness, and insignificance, in fact out of nothing, man is brought into being, how much rather shall man spring again into being out of a previously existing man? For it is not so difficult to make anything anew after it has once existed and fallen into decay, as to produce out of nothing that which has never existed. Now, in case we choose to exhibit the seminal fluid discharged from a man, and place by it a corpse, each by itself, which of them, as they both lie exposed to view, will the spectators think most likely to become a man—that drop, which is nothing at all, or that which has already shape, and size, and substance? For if the very thing which is nothing at all, merely because God pleases, be-

comes a man, how much rather shall that which has existence and is brought to perfection become again a man, if God pleases? For what was the purpose of the theologian Moses, in introducing, under a mystical sense, the Feast of Tabernacles in the Book of Leviticus? Was it that we may keep a feast to God, as the Jews with their low view of the Scriptures interpret it? as if God took pleasure in such tabernacles, decked out with fruits and boughs and leaves, which immediately wither and lose their verdure. We cannot say so. Tell me, then, what was the object of the Feast of Tabernacles?

²³ It was introduced to point to this real tabernacle of ours, which, after it was fallen down to corruption through the transgression of the law, and broken up by sin, God promised to put together again, and to raise up in incorruptibility, in order that we may truly celebrate in His honour the great and renowned Feast of Tabernacles at the resurrection; when our tabernacles are put together in the perfect order of immortality and harmony, and raised up from the dust in incorruption; when the dry bones, according to the most true prophecy, shall hear a voice, and be brought to their joints by God, the Creator and Perfect Artificer, who will then renew the flesh and bind it on, no more with such ties as those by which it was at first held together, but by such as shall be for ever undecaying and indissoluble. For I once saw on Olympus, which is a mountain of Lycia, fire bursting up from the ground spontaneously on the summit of the mountain; and by it was standing an Agnos tree, so flourishing, green, and shady, that one might suppose a never-failing stream of water had nourished its growth, rather than what was really the case. For which cause, therefore, though the natures of things are corruptible, and their bodies consumed by fire, and it is impossible for things which are once of an inflammable nature to remain unaffected by fire;

²⁴ yet this tree, so far from being burnt, is actually more vigorous and green than usual, though it is naturally inflammable, and that too when the fire is glowing about its very roots. I certainly cast some boughs of trees from the adjoining wood on to the place where the fire burst forth, and they immediately caught fire and were burnt to ashes. Now, then, tell me why it is that which cannot bear even to feel the heat of the sun, but withers up under it unless it be sprinkled with water, is not consumed when beset by such fiery heat, but both lives and thrives? What is the meaning of this marvel? God appointed this as an example and introduction to the day that is coming, in order that we may know more certainly that, when all things are deluged

with fire from heaven, the bodies which are distinguished by chastity and righteousness will be taken up by Him as free from all injury from the fire as from cold water. For truly, O beneficent and bountiful Lord, "the creature that serveth Thee, who art the Maker, increaseth his strength against the unrighteous for their punishment, and abateth his strength for the benefit of such as put their trust in Thee;" and at Thy pleasure fire cools, and injures nothing that Thou determinest to be preserved; and again, water burns more fiercely than fire, and nothing opposes Thine unconquerable power and might. For Thou createdst all things out of nothing;

²⁵ wherefore also Thou changest and transformest all things as Thou wilt, seeing they are Thine, and Thou alone art God. ²⁶ XV. The apostle certainly, after assigning the planting and watering to art and earth and water, conceded the growth to God alone, where he says, "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." For he knew that Wisdom, the first-born of God, the parent and artificer of all things, brings forth everything into the world; whom the ancients called Nature and Providence, because she, with constant provision and care, gives to all things birth and growth. "For," says the Wisdom of God, "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Now it is on this account that Solomon called Wisdom the artificer of all things, since God is in no respect poor, but able richly to create, and make, and vary, and increase all things. XVI. God, who created all things, and provides and cares for all things, took dust from the ground, and made our outer man.

PART II.

The Second Discourse on the Resurrection.

For instance, then, the images of our kings here, even though they be not formed of the more precious materials-gold or silver-are honoured by all. For men do not, while they treat with respect those of the far more precious material, slight those of a less valuable, but honour every image in the world, even though it be of chalk or bronze. And one who speaks against either of them, is not acquitted as if he had only spoken against clay, nor condemned for having despised gold, but for having been disrespectful towards the King and Lord Himself. The images of God's angels, which are fashioned of gold, the principalities and powers, we make to His honour and glory.

I. FROM THE DISCOURSE ON THE RESURRECTION.

¹I. Read the Book on the Resurrection by St. Methodius, Bishop and Martyr, of which that which follows is a selection, that the body is not the fetter of the soul, as Origen thought, nor are souls called by the prophet Jeremiah "fettered" on account of their being within bodies. For he lays down the principle that the body does not hinder the energies of the soul, but that rather the body is carried about with it, and cooperates in whatever the soul commits to it. But how are we to understand the opinion of Gregory the theologian, and many Others? II. That Origen said that the body was given to the soul as a fetter after the fall, and that previously it lived without a body; but that this body which we wear is the cause of our sins; wherefore also he called it a fetter, as it can hinder the soul from good works.

²III. That if the body was given to the soul after the fall as a fetter, it must have been given as a fetter upon the evil or the good. Now it is impossible that it should be upon the good; for no physician or artificer gives to that which has gone wrong a remedy to cause further error, much less would God do so. It remains, then, that it was a fetter upon evil. But surely we see that, at the beginning, Cain, clad in this body, committed murder; and it is evident into what wickedness those who succeeded him ran. The body is not, then, a fetter upon evil, nor indeed a fetter at all; nor was the soul clothed in it for the first time after the fall. IV. That man, with respect to his nature, is most truly said to be neither soul without body, nor, on the other hand, body without soul; but a being composed out of the union of soul and body into one form of the beautiful. But Origen said that the soul alone is man, as did Plato.

³V. That there is a difference between man and other living creatures; and to them are given varieties of natural form and shape, as many as the tangible and visible forces of nature produced at the command of God; while to him was given the form and image of God, with every part accurately finished, after the very original likeness of the Father and the only-begotten Son. Now we must consider how the saint states this. VI. He says that Phidias the statuary, after he had made the Pisaeon image of ivory, ordered oil to be poured out before it, that, as far as he could secure it, it might be preserved imperishable. VII. He says, as was said also by Athenagoras, that the devil is a spirit, made by God, in the neighbourhood of matter, as of course the rest of the angels are, and that he was entrusted with the oversight of matter, and

the forms of matter. For, according to the original constitution of angels, they were made by God, in His providence, for the care of the universe; in order that, while God exercises a perfect and general supervision over the whole, and keeps the supreme authority and power over all—for upon Him their existence depends—the angels appointed for this purpose take charge of particulars. Now the rest of them remained in the positions for which God made and appointed them; but the devil was insolent, and having conceived envy of us, behaved wickedly in the charge committed to him; as also did those who subsequently were enamoured of fleshly charms, and bad illicit intercourse with the daughters of men. For to them also, as was the case with men, God granted the possession of their own choice. And how is this to be taken?

4 VIII. He says that by the coats of skins is signified death. For he says of Adam, that when the Almighty God saw that by treachery he, an immortal being, had become evil, just as his deceiver the devil was, He prepared the coats of skins on this account; that when he was thus, as it were, clothed in mortality, all that was evil in him might die in the dissolution of the body. IX. He holds that St. Paul had two revelations. For the apostle, he says, does not suppose paradise to be in the third heaven, in the opinion of those who knew how to observe the niceties of language, when he says, "I know such a man caught up to the third heaven; and I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, God knoweth, that was caught up into paradise." Here he signifies that he has seen two revelations, having been evidently taken up twice, once to the third heaven, and once into paradise. For the words, "I know such a man caught up," make it certain that he was personally shown a revelation respecting the third heaven. And the words which follow, "And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, God knoweth, that he was caught up into paradise," show that another revelation was made to him respecting paradise. Now he was led to make this statement by his opponent's having laid it down from the apostle's words that paradise is a mere conception, as it is above the heaven, in order to draw the conclusion that life in paradise is incorporeal.

5 X. He says that it is in our power to do, or to avoid doing, evil; since otherwise we should not be punished for doing evil, nor be rewarded for doing well; but the presence or absence of evil thoughts does not depend upon ourselves. Wherefore even the sainted Paul says, "For what I would, that do I

not, but what I would not, that I do; " that is to say, "My thoughts are not what I would, but what I would not." Now he says that the habit of imagining evil is rooted out by the approach of physical death, -since it was for this reason that death was appointed by God for the sinner, that evil might not remain for ever. But what is the meaning of this statement? It is to be noted that it has been made by others of our Fathers as well. What is the meaning, seeing that those who meet death find in it at the time neither increase nor decrease of sins?

II. A SYNOPSIS OF SOME APOSTOLIC WORDS FROM THE SAME
DISCOURSE.

1. Read a compendious interpretation of some apostolic words from the same discourse. Let us see, then, what it is that we have endeavoured to say respecting the apostle. For this saying of his, "I was alive without the law once," refers to the life which was lived in paradise before the law, not without a body, but with a body, by our first parents, as we have shown above; for we lived without concupiscence, being altogether ignorant of its assaults. For not to have a law according to which we ought to live, nor a power of establishing what manner of life we ought to adopt, so that we might justly be approved or blamed, is considered to exempt a person from accusation. Because one cannot lust after those things from which he is not restrained, and even if he lusted after them, he would not be blamed. For lust is not directed to things which are before us, and subject to our power, but to those which are before us, and not in our power. For how should one care for a thing which is neither forbidden nor necessary to him? And for this reason it is said, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. For when (our first parents) heard, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die," then they conceived lust, and gathered it.

2 Therefore was it said, I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; "nor would they have desired to eat, except it had been said, "Thou shalt not eat of it. For it was thence that sin took occasion to deceive me. For when the law was given, the devil had it in his power to work lust in me; "for without the law, sin was dead; " which means "when the law was not given, sin could not be committed. But I was alive and blameless before the law, having no commandment in accordance with which it was necessary to live; "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For after God had given the law, and had commanded me what I ought to do, and what I ought not to do, the devil wrought lust in me. For the promise of God which was given to me, this was for life and incorruption, so that obeying it I might have ever-blooming life and joy unto incorruption; but to him who disobeyed it, it would issue in death. But the devil, whom he calls sin, because he is the author of sin, taking occasion by the commandment to deceive me to disobedience, deceived and slew me, thus rendering me subject to the condemnation, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good;

3 " because it was given, not for injury, but for safety; for let us not suppose that God makes anything useless or hurtful. What thou? "Was then that which is good made death unto me? " namely, that which was given as a law, that it might be the cause of the greatest good? "God forbid. For it was not the law of God that became the cause of my being brought into subjection to corruption, but the devil; that he might be made manifested who, through that which is good, wrought evil; that the inventor of evil might become and be proved the greatest of all sinners. "For we know that the law is spiritual; " and therefore it can in no respect be injurious to any one; for spiritual things are far removed from irrational lust and sin. "But I am carnal, sold under sin; " which means: But I being carnal, and being placed between good and evil as a voluntary agent, am so that I may have it in my power to choose what I will. For "behold I set before thee life and death; " meaning that death would result from disobedience of the spiritual law, that is of the commandment; and from obedience to the carnal law, that is the counsel of the serpent; for by such a choice "I am sold" to the devil, fallen under sin.

4 Hence evil, as though besieging me, cleaves to me and dwells in me, justice giving me up to be sold to the Evil One, in consequence of having violated the law. Therefore also the expressions: "That which I do, I allow not," and "what I hate, that do I," are not to be understood of doing evil, but of only thinking it. For it is not in our power to think or not to think of improper things, but to act or not to act upon our thoughts. For we cannot hinder thoughts from coming into our minds, since we receive them when they are inspired into us from without; but we are able to abstain from obeying them and acting upon them. Therefore it is in our power to will not to

think these things; but not to bring it about that they shall pass away, so as not to come into the mind again; for this does not lie in our power, as I said; which is the meaning of that statement, "The good that I would, I do not; " for i do not will to think the things which injure me; for this good is altogether innocent. But "the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do; "not willing to think, and yet thinking what I do not will. And consider whether it was not for these very things that David entreated God, grieving that he thought of those things which he did not will:

5 "O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults. Keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins. lest they get the dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence. And the apostle too, in another place: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 6 II. But if any one should venture to oppose this statement, and reply, that the apostle teaches that we hate not only the evil which is in thought, but that we do that which we will not, and we hate it even in the very act of doing it, for he says, " The good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do; " if he who says so speaks the truth, let us ask him to explain what was the evil which the apostle hated and willed not to do, but did; and the good which he willed to do, but did not; and conversely, whether as often as he willed to do good, so often he did not do the good which he willed, but did the evil which he willed not? And how he can say, when exhorting us to shake off all manner of sin, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ? " Thus he meant the things already mentioned which he willed not to do, not to be done, but only to be thought of. For how otherwise could he be an exact imitation of Christ? It would be excellent then, and most delightful, if we had not those who oppose us, and contend with us; but since this is impossible, we cannot do what we will. For we will not to have those who lead us to passion, for then we could be saved without weariness and effort;

7 but that does not come to pass which we will, but that which we will not. For it is necessary, as I said, that we should be tried. Let us not then, O my soul, let us not give in to the Evil One; but putting on " the whole armour of God," which is our protection, let us have "the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel (of peace). Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the

fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God," that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ," "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood;" for that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing. And this is rightly said. For remember how it has been already shown that, from the time when man went astray and disobeyed the law, thence sin, receiving its birth from his disobedience, dwelt in him.

8 For thus a commotion was stirred up, and we were filled with agitations and foreign imaginations, being emptied of the divine inspiration and filled with carnal desire, which the cunning serpent infused into us. And, therefore, God invented death for our sakes, that He might destroy sin, lest rising up in us immortals, as I said, it should be immortal. When the apostle says, "for I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing," by which words he means to indicate that sin dwells in us, from the transgression, through lust; out of which, like young shoots, the imaginations of pleasure rise around us. For there are two kinds of thoughts in us; the one which arises from the lust which lies in the body, which, as I said, came from the craft of the Evil Spirit; the other from the law, which is in accordance with the commandment, which we had implanted in us as a natural law, stirring up our thoughts to good, when we delight in the law of God according to our mind, for this is the inner man; but in the law of the devil according to the lust which dwells in the flesh. For he who wars against and opposes the law of God, that is, against the tendency of the mind to good, is the same who stirs up the carnal and sensual impulses to lawlessness.

9 III. For the apostle here sets forth clearly, as I think, three laws: One in accordance with the good which is implanted in us, which clearly he calls the law of the mind. One the law which arises from the assault of evil, and which often draws on the soul to lustful fancies, which, he says, "wars against the law of the mind. And the third, which is in accordance with sin, settled in the flesh from lust, which he calls the "law of sin which dwells in our members;" which the Evil One, urging on, often stirs up against us, driving us to unrighteousness and evil deeds. For there seems to be in ourselves one thing

which is better and another which is worse. And when that which is in its nature better is about to become more powerful than that which is worse, the whole mind is carried on to that which is good; but when that which is worse increases and overbalances, man is on the contrary urged on to evil imaginations. On account of which the apostle prays to be delivered from it, regarding it as death and destruction; as also does the prophet when he says, "Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults. And the same is denoted by the words, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

10 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? " By which he does not mean that the body is death, but the law of sin which is in his members, lying hidden in us through the transgression, and ever deluding the soul to the death of unrighteousness. And he immediately adds, clearly showing from what kind of death he desired to be delivered, and who he was who delivered him, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ. And it should be considered, if he said that this body was death, O Aglaophon, as you supposed, he would not afterwards mention Christ as delivering him from so great an evil. For in that case what a strange thing should we have had from the advent of Christ? And how could the apostle have said this, as being able to be delivered from death by the advent of Christ; when it was the lot of all to die before Christ's coming into the world? And, therefore, O Aglaophon, he says not that this body was death, but the sin which dwells in the body through lust, from which God has delivered him by the coming of Christ. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death; "so that "He that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you; "having "condemned sin" which is in the body to its destruction;

11 "that the righteousness of the law" of nature which draws us to good, and is in accordance with the commandment, might be kindled and manifested. For the good which "the law" of nature "could not do, in that it was weak," being overcome by the lust which lies in the body, God gave strength to accomplish, "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; "so that sin being condemned, to its destruction, so that it should never bear fruit in the flesh, the righteousness of the law of nature might be fulfilled, abounding in the obedience of those who walk not according to the lust of the flesh,

but according to the lust and guidance of the Spirit; "for the law of the Spirit of life," which is the Gospel, being different from earlier laws, leading by its preaching to obedience and the remission of sins, delivered us from the law of sin and death, having conquered entirely sin which reigned over our flesh.

¹² IV. He says that plants are neither nourished nor increased from the earth. For he says, let any one consider how the earth can be changed and taken up into the substance of trees. For then the place of the earth which lay around, and was drawn up through the roots into the whole compass of the tree, where the tree grew, must needs be hollowed out; so that such a thing as they hold respecting the flux of bodies, is absurd. For how could the earth first enter in through the roots into the trunks of the plants, and then, passing through their channels into all their branches, be turned into leaves and fruit? Now there are large trees, such as the cedar, pines, firs, which annually bear much leaves and fruit; and one may see that they consume none of the surrounding earth into the bulk and substance of the tree. For it would be necessary, if it were true that the earth went up through the roots, and was turned into wood, that the whole place where the earth lay round about them should be hollowed out; for it is not the nature of a dry substance to flow in, like a moist substance, and fill up the place of that which moves away. Moreover, there are fig-trees, and other similar plants, which frequently grow in the buildings of monuments, and yet they never consume the entire building into themselves.

¹³ But if any one should choose to collect their fruit and leaves for many years, he would perceive that their bulk had become much larger than the earth upon the monuments. Hence it is absurd to suppose that the earth is consumed into the crop of fruits and leaves; and even if they were all made by it, they would be so only as using it for their seat and place. For bread is not made without a mill, and a place, and time, and fire; and yet bread is not made out of any of these things. And the same may be said of a thousand other things. ¹⁴ V. Now the followers of Origen bring forward this passage, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved," and so forth, to disprove the resurrection of the body, saying that the "tabernacle" is the body, and the "house not made with hands" "in the heavens" is our spiritual clothing. Therefore, says the holy Methodius, by this earthly house must metaphorically be understood our short-lived existence here, and not this tabernacle; for if you decide to consider the body as being the

earthly house which is dissolved, tell us what is the tabernacle whose house is dissolved? For the tabernacle is one thing, and the house of the tabernacle another, and still another we who have the tabernacle. "For," he says, "if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved"-by which he points out that the souls are ourselves, that the body is a tabernacle, and that the house of the tabernacle figuratively represents the enjoyment of the flesh in the present life. If, then, this present life of the body be dissolved like a house, we shall have that which is not made with hands in the heavens. "Not made with hands," he says, to point out the difference; because this life may be said to be made with hands, seeing that all the employments and pursuits of life are carried on by the hands of men. For the body, being the workmanship of God, is not said to be made with hands, inasmuch as it is not formed by the arts of men.

15 But if they shall say that it is made with hands, because it was the workmanship of God, then our souls also, and the angels, and the spiritual clothing in the heavens, are made with hands; for all these things, also, are the workmanship of God. What, then, is the house which is made with hands? It is, as I have said, the short-lived existence which is sustained by human hands. For God said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;" and when that life is dissolved, we have the life which is not made with hands. As also the Lord showed, when He said: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. For what the Lord then called "habitations," the apostle here calls "clothing. And what He there calls "friends" "of unrighteousness," the apostle here calls "houses" "dissolved. As then, when the days of our present life shall fail, those good deeds of beneficence to which we have attained in this unrighteous life, and in this "world" which "lieth in wickedness," will receive our souls; so when this perishable life shall be dissolved, we shall have the habitation which is before the resurrection-that is, our souls shall be with God, until we shall receive the new house which is prepared for us, and which shall never fall. Whence also "we groan," "not for that we would be unclothed," as to the body, "but clothed upon" by it in the other life.

16 For the "house in heaven," with which we desire to be "clothed," is immortality; with which, when we are clothed, every weakness and mortality will be entirely "swallowed up" in it, being consumed by endless life. "For we

walk by faith, not by sight; " that is, for we still go forward by faith, viewing the things which are beyond with a darkened understanding, and not clearly, so that we may see these things, and enjoy them, and be in them. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. By flesh, he did not mean flesh itself, but the irrational impulse towards the lascivious pleasures of the soul. And therefore when he says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he adds the explanation, "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Now corruption is not the thing which is corrupted, but the thing which corrupts. For when death prevails the body sinks into corruption; but when life still remains in it, it stands uncorrupted. Therefore, since the flesh is the boundary between corruption and incorruption, not being either corruption or incorruption, it was vanquished by corruption on account of pleasure, although it was the work and the possession of incorruption. Therefore it became subject to corruption. When, then, it had been overcome by corruption, and was given over to death for chastisement, He did not leave it to be vanquished and given over as an inheritance to corruption;

17 but again conquering death by the resurrection, He restored it to incorruption, that corruption might not inherit incorruption, but incorruption that which is corruptible. And therefore the apostle answers, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. But the corruptible and mortal putting on incorruption and immortality, what else is this, but that which is sown in corruption rising in incorruption? For, "as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. For the "image of the earthly" which we have borne refers to the saying, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. And the "image of the heavenly is the resurrection from the dead and incorruption." 18 VI. Now Justin of Neapolis, a man not far removed either from the times or from the virtues of the apostles, says that that which is mortal is inherited, but that life inherits; and that flesh dies, but that the kingdom of heaven lives. When then, Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven," he does not so speak as seeming to slight the regeneration of the flesh, but as teaching that the kingdom of God, which is eternal life, is not inherited by the body, but the body by life. For if the kingdom of God, which is life, were inherited by the body, it would happen that life was swallowed up by corrup-

tion. But now life inherits that which is mortal, that death may be swallowed up of life unto victory, and that which is corruptible appear the possession of incorruption; being made free from death and sin, and become the slave and subject of immortality, that the body may become the possession of incorruption, and not incorruption of the body.

¹⁹ VII. Now the passage, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive," St. Methodius thus explains: Those are our bodies; for the souls are we ourselves, who, rising, resume that which is dead from the earth; so that being caught up with them to meet the Lord, we may gloriously celebrate the splendid festival of the resurrection, because we have received our everlasting tabernacles, which shall no longer die nor be dissolved. VIII. I saw, he says, on Olympus (Olympus is a mountain in Lycia), a fire spontaneously arising on the top of the mountain from the earth, beside which is the plant Puragnos, so flourishing, green, and shady, that it seemed rather as though it grew from a fountain. For what cause, although they are by nature corruptible, and their bodies consumed by fire, was this plant not only not burnt, but rather more flourishing, although in its nature it is easily burnt, and the fire was burning about its roots? Then I cast branches of trees out of the surrounding wood into the place where the fire streamed forth, and, immediately bursting up into flame, they were converted into cinders. What then is the meaning of this contradiction? This God appointed as a sign and prelude of the coming Day, that we may know that, when all things are overwhelmed by fire, the bodies which are endowed with chastity and righteousness shall pass through it as though it were cold water.

²⁰ IX. Consider, he says, whether too the blessed John, when he says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them," does not mean the parts which are given up by the elements for the reconstruction of each one? By the sea is meant the moist element; by hell, the air, derived from *a0eide/j*, because it is invisible, as was said by Origen; and by death, the earth, because those who die are laid in it; whence also it is called in the Psalms the "dust of death," Christ saying that He is brought "into the dust of death." X. For, he says, whatever is composed and consists of pure air and pure fire, and is of like substance with the angelic beings, cannot have the nature of earth and water; since it would then be earthy. And of such nature, and consisting of such things, Origen

has shown that the body of man shall be which shall rise, which he also said would be spiritual.

21 XI. And he asks what will be the appearance of the risen body, when this human form, as according to him useless, shall wholly disappear; since it is the most lovely of all things which are combined in living creatures, as being the form which the Deity Himself employs, as the most wise Paul explains: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; " in accordance with which the rational bodies of the angels are set in order? will it be circular, or polygonal, or cubical, or pyramidal? For there are very many kinds of forms; but this is impossible. Well then, what are we to think of the assertion, that the godlike shape is to be rejected as more ignoble, for he himself allows that the soul is like the body, and that man is to rise again without hands or feet?

22 XII. The transformation, he says, is the restoration into an impassible and glorious state. For now the body is a body of desire and of humiliation, and therefore Daniel was called "a man of desires." But then it will be transfigured into an impassible body, not by the change of the arrangement of the members, but by its not desiring carnal pleasures. Then he says, refuting Origen, Origen therefore thinks that the same flesh will not be restored to the soul, but that the form of each, according to the appearance by which the flesh is now distinguished, shall arise stamped upon another spiritual body; so that every one will again appear the same form; and that this is the resurrection which is promised. For, he says, the material body being fluid, and in no wise remaining in itself, but wearing out and being replaced around the appearance by which its shape is distinguished, and by which the figure is contained, it is necessary that the resurrection should be only that of the forth.

23 XIII. Then, after a little, he says: If then, O Origen, you maintain that the resurrection of the body changed into a spiritual body is to be expected only in appearance, and put forth the vision of Moses and Elias as a most convincing proof of it; saying that they appeared after their departure from life, preserving no different appearance from that which they had from the beginning; in the same way will be the resurrection of all men. But Moses and Elias arose and appeared with this form of which you speak, before Christ suffered and rose. How then could Christ be celebrated by prophets and apostles as "the first begotten of the dead? " For if the Christ is believed

to be the first begotten of the dead, He is the first begotten of the dead as having risen before all others. But Moses appeared to the apostles before Christ suffered, having this form in which you say the resurrection is fulfilled. Hence then, there is no resurrection of the form without the flesh. For either there is a resurrection of the form as you teach, and then Christ is no longer "the first begotten of the dead," from the fact that souls appeared before Him, having this form after death; or He is truly the first begotten, and it is quite impossible that any should have been thought meet for a resurrection before Him, so as not to die again.

²⁴ But if no one arose before Him, and Moses and Elias appeared to the apostles not having flesh, but only its appearance, the resurrection in the flesh is clearly manifested. For it is most absurd that the resurrection should be set forth only in form, since the souls, after their departure from the flesh, never appear to lay aside the form which, he says, rises again. But if that remains with them, so that it cannot be taken away, as with the soul of Moses and Elias; and neither perishes, as you think, nor is destroyed, but is everywhere present with them; then surely that form which never fell cannot be said to rise again. ²⁵ XIV. But if any one, finding this inadmissible, answers, But how then, if no one rose before Christ went down into Hades, are several recorded as having risen before Him? Among whom is the son of the widow of Sarepta, and the son of the Shunammite, and Lazarus. We must say: These rose to die again; but we are speaking of those who shall never die after their rising. And if any one should speak doubtfully concerning the soul of Elias, as that the Scriptures say that he was taken up in the flesh, and we say that he appeared to the apostles divested of the flesh, we must say, that to allow that he appeared to the apostles in the flesh is more in favour of our argument. For it is shown by this case that the body is susceptible of immortality, as was also proved by the translation of Enoch. For if he could not receive immortality, he could not remain in a state of insensibility so long a time. If, then, he appeared with the body, that was truly after he was dead, but certainly not as having arisen from the dead. And this, we may say, if we agree with Origen when he says that the same form is given to the soul after death; when it is separated from the body, which is of all things the most impossible, from the fact that the form of the flesh was destroyed before by its changes, as also the form of the melted statue before its entire dissolution. Be cause the quality cannot be separated from the material, so as to exist by itself; for the

shape which disappears around the brass is separated from the melted statue, and has not longer a substantial existence.

26 XV. Since the form is said to be separated in death from the flesh, come, let us consider in how many ways that which is separated is said to be separated. Now a thing is said to be separated from another either in act and subsistence, or in thought; or else in act, but not in subsistence. As if, for instance, one should separate from each other wheat and barley which had been mingled together; in as far as they are separated in motion, they are said to be separated in act in as far as they stand apart when separated, they are said to be separated in subsistence. They are separated in thought when we separate matter from its qualities, and qualities from matter; in act, but not in subsistence, when a thing separated from another no longer exists, not having a substantive existence. And it may be observed that it is so also in mechanics, when one looks upon a statue or a brazen horse melted. For, when he considers these things, he will see their natural form changing; and they alter into another figure from which the original form disappears. For if any one should melt down the works formed into the semblance of a man or a horse, he will find the appearance of the form disappearing, but the material itself remaining. It is, therefore, untenable to say, that the form shall arise in nowise corrupted, but that the body in which the form was stamped shall be destroyed.

27 XVI. But he says that it will be so; for it will be changed in a spiritual body. Therefore, it is necessary to confess that the very same forth as at first does not arise, from its being changed and corrupted with the flesh. For although it be changed into a spiritual body, that will not be properly the original substance, but a certain resemblance of it, fashioned in an ethereal body. If, however, it is not the same form, nor yet the body which arises, then it is another in the place of the first. For that which is like, being different from that which it resembles, cannot be that very first thing in accordance with which it was made. XVII. Moreover, he says that that is the appearance or form which shows forth the identity of the members in the distinctive character of the form. 28 XVIII. And, when Origen allegorises that which is said by the prophet Ezekiel concerning the resurrection of the dead, and perverts it to the return of the Israelites from their captivity in Babylon, the saint in refuting him, after many other remarks, says this also: For neither did they obtain a perfect liberty, nor did they overcome their enemies by a

greater power, and dwell again in Jerusalem; and when they frequently intended to build (the temple), they were prevented by other nations. Whence, also, they were scarce able to build that in forty-six years, which Solomon completed from the foundations in seven years. But what need we say on this subject? For from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and those who after him reigned over Babylon, until the time of the Persian expedition against the Assyrians, and the empire of Alexander, and the war which was stirred up by the Romans against the Jews, Jerusalem was six times overthrown by its enemies. And this is recorded by Josephus, who says: "Jerusalem was taken in the second year of the reign of Vespasian. It had been taken before five times; but now for the second time it was destroyed. For Asiochaeus, king of Egypt, and after him Antiochus, next Pompey, and after these Sosius, with Herod, took the city and burnt it; but before these, the king of Babylon conquered and destroyed it."

²⁹ XIX. He says that Origen holds these opinions which he refutes. And there may be a doubt concerning Lazarus and the rich man. The simpler persons think that these things were spoken as though both were receiving their due for the things which they had done in life in their bodies; but the more accurate think that, since no one is left in life after the resurrection, these things do not happen at the resurrection. For the rich man says: "I have five brethren; ... lest they also come into this place of torment, " send Lazarus, that he may tell them of those things which are here. And, therefore, if we ask respecting the "tongue," and the "finger," and "Abraham's bosom," and the reclining there, it may perhaps be that the soul receives in the change a form similar in appearance to its gross and earthly body. If, then, any one of those who have fallen asleep is recorded as having appeared, in the same way he has been seen in the form which he had when he was in the flesh. Besides, when Samuel appeared, it is clear that, being seen, he was clothed in a body; and this must especially be admitted, if we are pressed by arguments which prove that the essence of the soul is incorporeal, and is manifested by itself.

³⁰ But the rich man in torment, and the poor man who was comforted in the bosom of Abraham, are said, the one to be punished in Hades, and the other to be comforted in Abraham's bosom, before the appearing of the Saviour, and before the end of the world, and therefore before the resurrection; teaching that now already, at the change, the soul rises a body. Wherefore,

the saint says as follows: Setting forth that the soul, after its removal hence, has a form similar in appearance to this sensitive body; does Origen represent the soul, after Plato, as being incorporeal? And how should that which, after removal from the world, is said to have need of a vehicle and a clothing, so that it might not be found naked, be in itself other than incorporeal? But if it be incorporeal, must it not also be incapable of passion? For it follows, from its being incorporeal, that it is also impassible and imperturbable. If, then, it was not distracted by any irrational desire, neither was it changed by a pained or suffering body. For neither can that which is incorporeal sympathize with a body, nor a body with that which is incorporeal, if, indeed, the soul should seem to be incorporeal, in accordance with what has been said. But if it sympathize with the body, as is proved by the testimony of those who appear, it cannot be incorporeal. Therefore God alone is celebrated, as the unbegotten, independent, and unwearied nature; being incorporeal, and therefore invisible;

³¹ for "no man hath seen God. But souls, being rational bodies, are arranged by the Maker and Father of all things into members which are visible to reason, having received this impression. Whence, also, in Hades, as in the case of Lazarus and the rich man, they are spoken of as having a tongue, and a finger, and the other members; not as though they had with them another invisible body, but that the souls themselves, naturally, when entirely stripped of their covering, are such according to their essence. ³² XX. The saint says at the end: The words, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living," must be taken as referring to souls and bodies; the souls being the living, as being immortal, and the bodies being dead. XXI. Since the body of man is more honourable than other living creatures, because it is said to have been formed by the hands of God. and because it has attained to be the vehicle of the reasonable soul; how is it that it is so short-lived, shorter even than some of the irrational creatures? Is it not clear that its long-lived existence will be after the resurrection?

On Leprosy

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

ON LEPROSY

¹ The following excerpt was commissioned commercially from the edition by G. Bonwetsch in the GCS series. This consisted of a German rendering of the Old Slavonic text, interspersed with Greek fragments (untranslated). The translator began at the start of Bonwetsch's text, but proved unable to handle the ecclesiastical vocabulary or the Greek. The commission was terminated at the end of p.456 of Bonwetsch. What follows is the material that was successfully translated. Roger Pearse December 2011 The holy Methodius, bishop of Olympus, to Sistelius, about leprosy. I. [1] From where, o Eubulius? Apparently not from trying to understand how divine scripture should be interpreted? For in the early morning someone belonging to Sistelius knocked on the door and when a boy opened it, he reported that Sistelius was summoning us to him. [2] And after I arose, I immediately departed. And when we were close to the dwelling, Sistelius walked towards me, embraced me and said: Having temporarily departed from us, you robbed us of the understanding of the scripture. For as a cloud that covers the sun prevents us from seeing the sun clearly, so as well, when good instruction goes away, the soul becomes dark and the meaning eclipsed. - And I answered him: You said (reported) this well.

² And after we entered the house, we sat down. [3] And Sistelius said: Now then, let us see in the scripture truth itself! With a healing herb we remove this bad leprosy, with words and with medications reducing the damage, saying: "Stand up, you, who are sleeping, and stand up from the dead, and Christ will illuminate (enlighten) you." [4] Now then is the time, he said, to raise your voice, that is to say explaining about the leprosy that is in the law,

wherein the Lord commands us to interpret much in the law allegorically, to inform the one thirsting for the gift of God of . . . an ungrudging gift. 3 II. [1] <Eubulius.> At the same time, do not think that I will rebuff one who wishes to receive this gift of mercy, even if I am weak in deed and word; but he, who plants the words (thoughts (?)) into the soul of each of us, will pull the bad roots out of our hearts and plant all virtues into our souls. [2] For when the nettle-like weed has dried out, then the flower of virtue blossoms. Which Christ now also compares allegorically to the "grain of mustard seed", saying that it will bring a large stock to the <birds> of heaven. [3] For to begin with, descending to our weaknesses the divine seed of faith becomes small; once it falls into the furrows of the soul, it grows to greatness, it proceeds to the height of piety by spiritual contemplation. [4] And the Lord justifiably calls his father the planter of such a planting, for "every single plant", he says, "which my father did not plant, will be (pulled out?)". For understand, that he speaks not because of the plurality of souls, as some thought, but of the proper teachings and of god-fearing thoughts (words), which the industrious planter planted invisibly into our hearts, weeding out the improper plantings from our hearts, i.e., the bad thoughts and deeds. [5] For if we do not believe such, then we become the successors of the very lawless Marcion, who says that another is the good one instead of the true God, and therefore the souls of the creator of the world could not receive the promised good life, they were without the planting of the good. However, we do not want to take that into consideration now, for it is not time for this proceeding now.

4 III. [1] For you are right to say, that one shouldn't hesitate and, now that the spiritual estate is being prepared by God, one should have strong fruits of wisdom, according to the words of the Apostle who says: "We are God's field." [2] For in order to keep the disease from spreading and to reveal it to everyone, we ought "to heal" through the songs of the gospel and see "if there is someone, who lacks God's mercy, whether there is an upward growing root causing damage and whether many are becoming defiled", the Apostle says, writing to the Jews. [3] However, the law also teaches us: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, saying: When a person shall have on the skin a sign of leprosy, then he should come before Aaron the priest, or one of his sons. And the priest shall examine the sore on his skin, to see if it is a sign of leprosy; and to check whether the leprosy is more than skin deep."

And soon thereafter: [4] "On the seventh day, the priest is to examine him; and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, the priest is to keep him in isolation for seven days for a second time.

⁵(On the seventh day the priest is to examine him for the second time), and if he sees that the sore has not changed, the priest cleans him, for it is a sign; and he should wash his clothes." And soon thereafter: [5] "If any clothing is contaminated with a sign of leprosy, in a woollen or linen clothing or anything made of leather and the leprosy becomes scarlet red or green"; furthermore in the following . . . IV.[1] . . having said little, you reprimand. But now, O Sistelius, the truth itself, namely the law, <is> to be stated. We should now attempt to understand these insights spiritually, so that we may understand the spirit of the law and not just the word. [2] But continuing in the proceedings he adds: "If it has spread" after the removal of the "mildew in the clothing or the leather or the attire or the weft, then the remaining mildew is leprosy, it is unclean, and he must burn the clothing or attire or the weft" etc., shown to the priest.

⁶However, this is now the explanation for the leprosy in the law. [3] For I, myself, believe, that the prophet used these words as specific cloaks and shadows, whereby God wanted to lead us to the light of truth this way. [4] This is why, I think, the holy Paul said: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is still hidden among the lost, in whom the God of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that in them cannot shine the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of the invisible," by clearly stating, that the gospel is revealed to the believers and the "to be saved", but "veiled" to the "ones being lost" as if attached with iron clamps. [5] For one, who understands the scripture from the outside, goes forward without spiritual understanding, like someone who has seen empty walls built from stones. However, one who has fought vigorously", who has torn the spiritual veil, who, after having risen like a bird inspired by God's spirit, [has] reached the inner understanding of the scripture, which is the most holy; and arrives at the bright light, will be nourished by the lightning of true beauty. [6] For as the trees are stripped of the ornament of fruit in winter, but regain their ornaments in the spring with the sprouting of the leaves, - so I think, the words of the prophets too seem barren without meaning if taken at their word, but if interpreted with wisdom, if viewed as laden with fruit and leaves, have blossoms of a multitude of senses.

7 Therefore, O Sistelius, refusing to take them literally, let us carefully interpret the scriptures spiritually!

V.[1] However, we now say, as Christ instructs us:

8 <Greek fragment> Thus the scripture <recounts> that Moses's sister had leprosy, because she spoke ill of her brother. [5] However, the prophet, the holy Jeremiah, also says: "Sow not among thorns, but circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the uncircumcision of your hearts," [Jer. 4:3-4] saying: Circumcise the evil passions, so that we deliver the [soul] unstained to God. [6] For I think, the Lord also gave these commandments to his disciples, to walk "without a staff and without two tunics <and without shoes>." For the evangelists have to, by [The translation work was ended here at the foot of p.456, but Bonwetsch continues.]

Oration Concerning Simeon and Anna

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

ORATION CONCERNING SIMEON AND ANNA

On the Day that They Met in the Temple.

1 I. Although I have before, as briefly as possible, in my dialogue on chastity, sufficiently laid the foundations, as it were, for a discourse on virginity, yet to-day the season has brought forward the entire subject of the glory of virginity, and its incorruptible crown, for the delightful consideration of the Church's foster-children. For to-day the council chamber of the divine oracles is opened wide, and the signs prefiguring this glorious day, with its effects and issues, are by the sacred preachers read over to the assembled Church. Today the accomplishment of that ancient and true counsel is, in fact and deed, gloriously manifested to the world. Today, without any covering, and with unveiled face, we see, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, and the majesty of the divine ark itself. To-day, the most holy assembly, bearing upon its shoulders the heavenly joy that was for generations expected, imparts it to the race of man. "Old things are passed away" --things new burst forth into flowers, and such as fade not away. No longer does the stern decree of the law bear sway, but the grace of the Lord reigneth, drawing all men to itself by saving long-suffering. No second time is an Uzziah invisibly punished, for daring to touch what may not be touched; for God Himself invites, and who will stand hesitating with fear? He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. Who, then, will not run to Him?"

2 Let no Jew contradict the truth, looking at the type which went before the house of Obededom. The Lord has "manifestly come to His own. And sitting on a living and not inanimate ark, as upon the mercy-seat, He comes forth in solemn procession upon the earth. The publican, when he touches

this ark, comes away just; the harlot, when she approaches this, is remoulded, as it were, and becomes chaste; the leper, when he touches this, is restored whole without pain. It repulses none; it shrinks from none; it imparts the gifts of healing, without itself contracting any disease; for the Lord, who loves and cares for man, in it makes His resting-place. These are the gifts of this new grace. This is that new and strange thing that has happened under the sun - a thing that never had place before, nor will have place again. That which God of His compassion toward us foreordained has come to pass, He hath given it fulfilment because of that love for man which is so becoming to Him. With good right, therefore, has the sacred trumpet sounded, "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And what shall I conceive, what shall I speak worthy of this day? I am struggling to reach the inaccessible, for the remembrance of this holy virgin far transcends all words of mine.

3 Wherefore, since the greatness of the panegyric required completely puts to shame our limited powers, let us betake ourselves to that hymn which is not beyond our faculties, and boasting in our own unalterable defeat, let us join the rejoicing chorus of Christ's flock, who are keeping holyday. And do you, my divine and saintly auditors, keep strict silence, in order that through the narrow channel of ears, as into the harbour of the understanding, the vessel freighted with truth may peacefully sail. We keep festival, not according to the vain customs of the Greek mythology; we keep a feast which brings with it no ridiculous or frenzied banqueting of the gods, but which teaches us the wondrous condescension to us men of the awful glory of Him who is God over all. 4 II. Come, therefore, Isaiah, most solemn of preachers and greatest of prophets, wisely unfold to the Church the mysteries of the congregation in glory, and incite our excellent guests abundantly, to satiate themselves with enduring dainties, in order that, placing the reality which we possess over against that mirror of thine, truthful prophet as thou art, thou mayest joyfully clap thine hands at the issue of thy predictions. It came to pass, he says, "in the year in which king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the house was full of His glory. And the seraphim stood round about him: each one had six wings. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door were moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, Woe is

me! I am pricked to the heart, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. And one of the seraphim was sent unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.

5 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I strict, and who will go unto this people? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, bat understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. These are the proclamations made beforehand by the prophet through the Spirit. Do thou, dearly beloved, consider the force of these words. So shalt thou understand the issue of these sacramental symbols, and know both what and how great this assembling together of ourselves is. And since the prophet has before spoken of this miracle, come thou, and with the greatest ardour and exultation, and alacrity of heart, together with the keenest sagacity of thine intelligence, and therewith approach Bethlehem the renowned, and place before thy mind an image clear and distinct, comparing the prophecy with the actual issue of events. Thou wilt not stand in need of many words to come to a knowledge of the matter; only fix thine eyes on the things which are taking place there. "All things truly are plain to them that understand, and right to them that find knowledge. For, behold, as a throne high and lifted up by the glory of Him that fashioned it, the virgin-mother is there made ready, and that most evidently for the King, the Lord of hosts. Upon this, consider the Lord now coming unto thee in sinful flesh. Upon this virginal throne, I say, worship Him who now comes to thee by this new and ever-adorable way.

6 Look around thee with the eye of faith, and thou wilt find around Him, as by the ordinance of their courses, the royal and priestly company of the seraphim. These, as His bodyguard, are ever wont to attend the presence of their king. Whence also in this place they are not only said to hymn with their praises the divine substance of the divine unity, but also the glory to be adored by all of that one of the sacred Trinity, which now, by the appearance of God in the flesh, hath even lighted upon earth. They say: "The whole earth is full of His glory. For we believe that, together with the Son, who was made man for oar sakes, according to the good pleasure of His will, was also present the Father, who is inseparable from Him as to His divine nature, anal

also the Spirit, who is of one and the same essence with Him. For, as says Paul, the interpreter of the divine oracle, "Cod was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He thus shows that the Father was in the Son, because that one and the same will worked in them.

7 III. Do thou, therefore, O lover of this festival, when thou hast considered well the glorious mysteries of Bethlehem, which were brought to pass for thy sake, gladly join thyself to the heavenly host, which is celebrating magnificently thy salvation. As once David did before the ark, so do thou, before this virginal throne, joyfully lead the dance. Hymn with gladsome song the Lord, who is always and everywhere present, and Him who from Teman, as says the prophet, hath thought fit to appear, and that in the flesh, to the race of men. Say, with Moses, "He is my God, and I will glorify Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. Then, after thine hymn of thanksgiving, we shall usefully inquire what cause aroused the King of Glory to appear in Bethlehem. His compassion for us compelled Him, who cannot be compelled, to be born in a human body at Bethlehem. But what necessity was there that He, when a suckling infant, that He who, though both in time, was not limited by time, that He, who though wrapped in swaddling clothes, was not by them held fast, what necessity was there that He should be an exile and a stranger from His country?

8 Should you, forsooth, wish to know this, ye congregation most holy, and upon whom the Spirit of God hath breathed, listen to Moses proclaiming plainly to the people, stimulating them, as it were, to the knowledge of this extraordinary nativity, and saying, "Every male that openeth the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord. O wondrous circumstance! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! It became indeed the Lord of the law and the prophets to do all things in accordance with His own law, and not to make void the law, but to fulfil it, and rather to connect with the fulfilment of the law the beginning of His grace. Therefore it is that the mother, who was superior to the law, submits to the law. And she, the holy and undefiled one, observes that time of forty days that was appointed for the unclean. And He who makes us free from the law, became subject to the law; and there is offered for Him, who hath sanctified us, a pair of clean birds, in testimony of those who approach clean and blameless. Now that that parturition was polluted, and stood not in need of expiatory victims, Isaiah is our

witness, who proclaims distinctly to the whole earth under the sun: "Before she travailed," he says, "she brought forth before her pains came, she escaped, and brought forth a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?"

9 The must holy virgin mother, therefore, escaped entirely the manner of women even before she brought forth: doubtless, in order that the Holy Spirit, betrothing her unto Himself, and sanctifying her, she might conceive without intercourse with man. She hath brought forth her first-born Son, even the only-begotten Son of God, Him, I say, who in the heavens above shone forth as the only-begotten, without mother, from out His Father's substance, and preserved the virginity of His natural unity undivided and inseparable; and who on earth, in the virgin's nuptial chamber, joined to Himself the nature of Adam, like a bridegroom, by an inalienable union, and preserved His mother's purity uncorrupt and un injured-Him, in short, who in heaven was begotten without corruption, and on earth brought forth in a manner quite unspeakable. But to return to our subject. 10 IV. Therefore the prophet brought the virgin from Nazareth, in order that she might give birth at Bethlehem to her salvation-bestowing child, and brought her back again to Nazareth, in order to make manifest to the world the hope of life. Hence it was that the ark of God removed from the inn at Bethlehem, for there He paid to the law that debt of the forty days, due not to justice but to grace, and rested upon the mountains of Sion, and receiving into His pure bosom as upon a lofty throne, and one transcending the nature of man, the Monarch of all, she presented Him there to God the Father, as the joint-partner of His throne and inseparable from His nature, together with that pure and undefiled flesh which he had of her substance assumed. The holy mother goes up to the temple to exhibit to the law a new and strange wonder, even that child long expected, who opened the virgin's womb, and yet did not burst the barriers of virginity; that child, superior to the law, who yet fulfilled the law; that child that was at once before the law, and yet after it; that child, in short, who was of her incarnate beyond the law of nature.

11 For in other cases every womb being first opened by connection with a man, and, being impregnated by his seed, receives the beginning of conception, and by the pangs which make perfect parturition, doth at length bring forth to light its offspring endowed with reason, and with its nature consistent, in accordance with the wise provision of God its Creator. For God said,

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. But the womb of this virgin, without being opened before, or being impregnated with seed, gave birth to an offspring that transcended nature, while at the same time it was cognate to it, and that without detriment to the indivisible unity, so that the miracle was the more stupendous, the prerogative of virginity likewise remaining intact. She goes up, therefore to the temple, she who was more exalted than the temple, clothed with a double glory-the glory, I say, of undefiled virginity, and that of ineffable fecundity, the benediction of the law, and the sanctification of grace. Wherefore he says who saw it: "And the whole house was full of His glory, and the seraphim stood round about him; and one cried unto another, and said. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. As also the blessed prophet Habakkuk has charmingly sung, saying, "In the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known: as the years draw nigh thou shalt be recognised-when the time is come thou shalt be shown forth.

¹² See, I pray you, the exceeding accuracy of the Spirit. He speaks of knowledge, recognition, showing forth. As to the first of these: "In the midst of two living creatures thou shalt be known," he refers to that overshadowing of the divine glory which, in the time of the law, rested in the Holy of holies upon the covering of the ark, between the typical cherubim, as He says to Moses, "There will I be known to thee. But He refers likewise to that concourse of angels, which hath now come to meet us, by the divine and ever adorable manifestation of the Saviour Himself in the flesh, although He in His very nature cannot be beheld by us, as Isaiah has even before declared. But when He says, "As the years draw nigh, thou shalt be recognised," He means, as has been said before, that glorious recognition of our Saviour, God in the flesh, who is otherwise invisible to mortal eye; as somewhere Paul, that great interpreter of sacred mysteries, says: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And then, as to that which is subjoined, "When the time is come, Thou shalt be shown forth," what exposition doth this require, if a man diligently direct the eye of his mind to the festival which we are now celebrating?

¹³ "For then shalt Thou be shown forth," He says, "as upon a kingly charger, by Thy pure and chaste mother, in the temple, and that in the grace and

beauty of the flesh assumed by Thee. All these things the prophet, summing up for the sake of greater clearness, exclaims in brief: "The Lord is in His holy temple; " "Fear before Him all the earth." ¹⁴ V. Tremendous, verily, is the mystery connected with thee, O virgin mother, thou spiritual throne, glorified and made worthy of God. Thou hast brought forth, before the eyes of those in heaven and earth, a pre-eminent wonder. And it is a proof of this, and an irrefragable argument, that at the novelty of thy supernatural child-bearing, the angels sang on earth, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men," by their threefold song bringing in a threefold holiness. Blessed art thou among the generations of women, O thou of God most blessed, for by thee the earth has been filled with that divine glory of God; as in the Psalms it is sung: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. Amen. Amen. And the posts of the door, says the prophet, moved at the voice of him that cried, by which is signified the veil of the temple drawn before the ark of the covenant, which typified thee, that the truth might be laid open to me, and also that I might be taught, by the types and figures which went before, to approach with reverence and trembling to do honour to the sacred mystery which is connected with thee; and that by means of this prior shadow-painting of the law I might be restrained from boldly and irreverently contemplating with fixed gaze Him who, in His incomprehensibility, is seated far above all.

¹⁵ For if to the ark, which was the image and type of thy sanctity, such honour was paid of God that to no one but to the priestly order only was the access to it open, or ingress allowed to behold it, the veil separating it off, and keeping the vestibule as that of a queen, what, and what sort of veneration is due to thee from us who are of creation the least, to thee who art indeed a queen; to thee, the living ark of God, the Lawgiver; to thee, the heaven that contains Him who can be contained of none? For since thou, O holy virgin, hast dawned as a bright day upon the world and hast brought forth the Sun of Righteousness, that hateful horror of darkness has been chased away; the power of the tyrant has been broken, death hath been destroyed, hell swallowed up, and all enmity dissolved before the face of peace; noxious diseases depart now that salvation looks forth; and the whole universe has been filled with the pure and clear light of truth. To which things Solomon alludes in the Book of Canticles, and begins thus: "My beloved is mine, and I

am his; he feedeth among the lilies until the day break, and the shadows flee away. Since then, the God of gods hath appeared in Sion, and the splendour of His beauty hath appeared in Jerusalem; and "a light has sprung up for the righteous, and joy for those who are true of heart.

¹⁶ According to the blessed David, the Perfecter and Lord of the perfected hath, by the Holy Spirit, called the teacher and minister of the law to minister and testify of those things which were done. ¹⁷ VI. Hence the aged Simeon, putting off the weakness of the flesh, and putting on the strength of hope, in the face of the law hastened to receive the Minister of the law, the Teacher with authority, the God of Abraham, the Protector of Isaac, the Holy One of Israel, the Instructor of Moses; Him, I say, who promised to show him His divine incarnation, as it were His hinder parts; Him who, in the midst of poverty, was rich; Him who in infancy was before the ages; Him who, though seen, was invisible; Him who in comprehension was incomprehensible; Him who, though in littleness, yet surpassed all magnitude-at one and the same time in the temple and in the highest heavens-on a royal throne, and on the chariot of the cherubim Him who is both above and below continuously Him who is in the form of a servant, and in the form of God the Father; a subject, and yet King of all. He was entirely given up to desire, to hope, to joy; he was no longer his own, but His who had been looked for. The Holy Spirit had announced to him the joyful tidings, and before he reached the temple, carried aloft by the eyes of his understanding, as if even now he possessed what he had longed for, he exulted with joy. Being thus led on, and in his haste treading the air with his steps, he reaches the shrine hitherto held sacred;

¹⁸ but, not heeding the temple, he stretches out his holy arms to the Ruler of the temple, chanting forth in song such strains as become the joyous occasion: I long for Thee, O Lord God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast deigned, of Thine own glory and goodness, which provides for all, of Thy gracious condescension, with which Thou inclinest towards us, as a Mediator bringing peace, to establish harmony between earth and heaven. I seek Thee, the Great Author of all. With longing I expect Thee who, with Thy word, embracest all things. I wait for Thee, the Lord of life and death. For Thee I look, the Giver of the law, and the Successor of the law. I hunger for Thee, who quickenest the dead; I thirst for Thee, who refreshest the weary; I desire Thee, the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Thou art our

God, and Thee we adore; Thou art our holy Temple, and in Thee we pray; Thou art our Lawgiver, and Thee we obey; Thou art God of all things the First. Before Thee was no other god begotten of God the Father; neither after Thee shall there be any other son consubstantial and of one glory with the Father. And to know Thee is perfect righteousness, and to know Thy power is the root of immortality. Thou art He who, for our salvation, was made the head stone of the corner, precious and honourable, declared before to Sion.

19 For all things are placed under Thee as their Cause and Author, as He who brought all things into being out of nothing, and gave to what was unstable a firm coherence; as the connecting Band and Preserver of that which has been brought into being; as the Framer of things by nature different; as He who, with wise and steady hand, holds the helm of the universe; as the very Principle of all good order; as the irrefragable Bond of concord and peace. For in Thee we live, and move, and have our being. Wherefore, O Lord my God, I will glorify Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; Thou art clothed with majesty and honour. For what is more splendid for a king than a purple robe embroidered around with flowers, and a shining diadem? Or what for God, who delights in man, is more magnificent than this merciful assumption of the manhood, illuminating with its resplendent rays those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death? Fitly did that temporal king and Thy servant once sing of Thee as the King Eternal, saying, Thou art fairer than the children of men, who amongst men art very God and man. For Thou hast girt, by Thy incarnation, Thy loins with righteousness, and anointed Thy veins with faithfulness, who Thyself art very righteousness and truth, the joy and exultation of all.

20 Therefore rejoice with me this day, ye heavens, for the Lord hath showed mercy to His people. Yea, let the clouds drop the dew of righteousness upon the world; let the foundations of the earth sound a trumpet-blast to those in Hades, for the resurrection of them that sleep is come. Let the earth also cause compassion to spring up to its inhabitants; for I am filled with comfort; I am exceeding joyful since I have seen Thee, the Saviour of men.

21 VII. While the old man was thus exultant, and rejoicing with exceeding great and holy joy, that which had before been spoken of in a figure by the prophet Isaiah, the holy mother of God now manifestly fulfilled. For taking,

as from a pure and undefiled altar, that coal living and ineffable, with man's flesh invested, in the embrace of her sacred hands, as it were with the tongs, she held Him out to that just one, addressing and exhorting him, as it seems to me, in words to this effect: Receive, O reverend senior, thou of priests the most excellent, receive the Lord, and reap the full fruition of that hope of thine which is not left widowed and desolate. Receive, thou of men the most illustrious, the unfailing treasure, and those riches which can never be taken away. Take to thine embrace, O thou of men most wise, that unspeakable might, that unsearchable power, which can alone support thee. Embrace, thou minister of the temple, the Greatness infinite, and the Strength incomparable. Fold thyself around Him who is the very life itself, and live, O thou of men most venerable, Cling closely to incorruption and be renewed, O thou of men most righteous. Not too bold is the attempt; shrink not from it then, O thou of men most holy. Satisfy thyself with Him thou hast longed for, and take thy delight in Him who has been given, or rather who gives Himself to thee, O thou of men most divine.

²² Joyfully draw thy light, O thou of men most pious, from the Sun of Righteousness, that gleams around thee through the unsullied mirror of the flesh. Fear not His gentleness, nor let His clemency terrify thee, O thou of men most blessed. Be not afraid of His lenity, nor shrink from His kindness, O thou of men most modest. Join thyself to Him with alacrity, and delay not to obey Him. That which is spoken to thee, and held out to thee, savours not of over-boldness. Be not then reluctant, O thou of men the most decorous. The flame of the grace of my Lord does not consume, but illuminates thee, O thou of men most just. Let the bush which set forth me in type, with respect to the verity of that fire which yet had no subsistence, teach thee this, O thou who art in the law the best instructed. Let that furnace which was as it were a breeze distilling dew persuade thee, O master, of the dispensation of this mystery. Then, beside all this, let my womb be a proof to thee, in which He was contained, who in nought else was ever contained, of the substance of which the incarnate Word yet deigned to become incarnate. The blast of the trumpet does not now terrify those who approach, nor a second time does the mountain all on smoke cause terror to those who draw nigh, nor indeed does the law punish relentlessly those who would boldly touch.

²³ What is here present speaks of love to man; what is here apparent, of the Divine condescension. Thankfully, then, receive the God who comes to

thee, for He shall take away thine iniquities, and thoroughly purge thy sins. In thee, let the cleansing of the world first, as in type, have place. In thee, and by thee, let that justification which is of grace become known beforehand to the Gentiles. Thou art worthy of the quickening first-fruits. Thou hast made good use of the law. Use grace henceforth. With the letter thou hast grown weary; in the spirit be renewed. Put off that which is old, and clothe thyself with that which is new. For of these matters I think not that thou art ignorant. ²⁴ VIII. Upon all this that righteous man, waxing bold and yielding to the exhortation of the mother of God, who is the handmaid of God in regard to the things which pertain to men, received into his aged arms Him who in infancy was yet the Ancient of days, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. I have received from Thee a joy unmixed with pain. Do thou, O Lord, receive me rejoicing, and singing of Thy mercy and compassion. Thou hast given unto me this joy of heart. I render unto Thee with gladness my tribute of thanksgiving. I have known the power of the love of God. Since, for my sake, God of Thee begotten, in a manner ineffable, and without corruption, has become man. I have known the inexplicable greatness of Thy love and care for us, for Thou hast sent forth Thine own bowels to come to our deliverance. Now, at length, I understand what I had from Solomon learned: "Strong as death is love: for by it shall the sting of death be done away, by it shall the dead see life, by it shall even death learn what death is, being made to cease from that dominion which over us he exercised.

²⁵ By it, also, shall the serpent, the author of our evils, be taken captive and overwhelmed. Thou hast made known to us, O Lord, Thy salvation, causing to spring up for us the plant of peace, and we shall no longer wander in error. Thou hast made known to us, O Lord, that Thou hast not unto the end overlooked Thy servants; neither hast Thou, O beneficent One, forgotten entirely the works of Thine hands. For out of Thy compassion for our low estate Thou hast shed forth upon us abundantly that goodness of Thine which is inexhaustible, and with Thy very nature cognate, having redeemed us by Thine only begotten Son, who is unchangeably like to Thee, and of one substance with Thee; judging it unworthy of Thy majesty and goodness

to entrust to a servant the work of saving and benefiting Thy servants, or to cause that those who had offended should be reconciled by a minister. But by means of that light, which is of one substance with Thee, Thou hast given light to those that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, in order that in Thy light they might see the light of knowledge; and it has seemed good to Thee, by means of our Lord and Creator, to fashion us again unto immortality; and Thou hast graciously given unto us a return to Paradise by means of Him who separated us from the joys of Paradise;

²⁶ and by means of Him who hath power to forgive sins Thou hast blotted out the handwriting which was against us. Lastly, by means of Him who is a partaker of Thy throne and who cannot be separated from Thy divine nature, Thou hast given unto us the gift of reconciliation and access unto Thee with confidence in order that, by the Lord who recognises the sovereign authority of none, by the true and omnipotent God, the subscribed sanction, as it were, of so many and such great blessings might constitute the justifying gifts of grace to be certain and indubitable rights to those who have obtained mercy. And this very thing the prophet before had announced in the words: No ambassador, nor angel, but the Lord Himself saved them; because He loved them, and spared them, and He took them up, and exalted them. And all this was, not of works of righteousness which we have done, nor because we loved Thee,-for our first earthly forefather, who was honourably entertained, in the delightful abode of Paradise, despised Thy divine and saving commandment, and was judged unworthy of that life-giving place, and mingling his seed with the bastard off-shoots of sin, he rendered it very weak;-but Thou, O Lord, of Thine own self, and of Thine ineffable love toward the creature of Thine hands, hast confirmed Thy mercy toward us, and, pitying our estrangement from Thee, hast moved Thyself at the sight of our degradation to take us into compassion.

²⁷ Hence, for the future, a joyous festival is established for us of the race of Adam, because the first Creator of Adam of His own free-will has become the Second Adam. And the brightness of the Lord our God hath come down to sojourn with us, so that we see God face to face, and are saved Therefore, O Lord, I seek of Thee to be allowed to depart. I have seen Thy salvation; let me be delivered from the bent yoke of the letter. I have seen the King Eternal, to whom no other succeeds; let me be set free from this servile and burdensome chain. I have seen Him who is by nature my Lord and Deliverer; may I ob-

tain, then, His decree for my deliverance. Set me free from the yoke of condemnation, and place me under the yoke of justification. Deliver me from the yoke of the curse, and of the letter that killeth; and enrol me in the blessed company of those who, by the grace of this Thy true Son, who is of equal glory and power with Thee, have been received into the adoption of sons.

28 IX. Let then, says he, what I have thus far said in brief, suffice for the present as my offering of thanks to God. But what shall I say to thee, O mother-virgin and virgin-mother? For the praise even of her who is not man's work exceeds the power of man. Wherefore the dimness of my poverty I will make bright with the splendour of the gifts of the spirits that around thee shine, and offering to thee of thine own, from the immortal meadows I will pluck a garland for thy sacred and divinely crowned head. With thine ancestral hymns will I greet thee, O daughter of David, and mother of the Lord and God of David. For it were both base and inauspicious to adorn thee, who in thine own glory excellest with that which belongeth unto another. Receive, therefore, O lady most benignant, gifts precious, and such as are fitted to thee alone, O thou who art exalted above all generations, and who, amongst all created things, both visible and invisible, shinest forth as the most honourable. Blessed is the root of Jesse, and thrice blessed is the house of David, in which thou hast sprung up. God is in the midst of thee, and thou shalt not be moved, for the Most High hath made holy the place of His tabernacle. For in thee the covenants and oaths made of God unto the fathers have received a most glorious fulfilment, since by thee the Lord hath appeared, the God of hosts with us.

29 That bush which could not be touched, which beforehand shadowed forth thy figure endowed with divine majesty, bare God without being consumed, who manifested Himself to the prophet just so far as He willed to be seen. Then, again, that hard and rugged rock, which imaged forth the grace and refreshment which has sprung out from thee for all the world, brought forth abundantly in the desert out of its thirsty sides a healing draught for the fainting people. Yea, moreover, the rod of the priest which, without culture, blossomed forth in fruit, the pledge and earnest of a perpetual priesthood, furnished no contemptible symbol of thy supernatural child-bearing. What, moreover? Hath not the mighty Moses expressly declared, that on account of these types of thee, hard to be understood, he delayed longer on the

mountain, in order that he might learn, O holy one, the mysteries that with thee are connected? For being commanded to build the ark as a sign and similitude of this thing, he was not negligent in obeying the command, although a tragic occurrence happened on his descent from the mount;

³⁰ but having made it in size five cubits and a half, he appointed it to be the receptacle of the law, and covered it with the wings of the cherubim, most evidently pre-signifying thee, the mother of God, who hast conceived Him without corruption, and in an ineffable manner brought forth Him who is Himself, as it were, the very consistence of incorruption, and that within the limits of the five and a half circles of the world. On thy account, and the undefiled Incarnation of God, the Word, which by thee had place for the sake of that flesh which immutably and indivisibly remains with Him for ever. The golden pot also, as a most certain type, preserved the manna contained in it, which in other cases was changed day by day, unchanged, and keeping fresh for ages. The prophet Elijah likewise, as prescient of thy chastity, and being emulous of it through the Spirit, bound around him the crown of that fiery life, being by the divine decree adjudged superior to death. Thee also, prefiguring his successor Elisha, having been instructed by a wise master, and anticipating thy presence who wast not yet born, by certain sure indications of the things that would have place hereafter, ministered help and healing to those who were in need of it, which was of a virtue beyond nature; now with a new cruse, which contained healing salt, curing the deadly waters, to show that the world was to be recreated by the mystery manifested in thee;

³¹ now with unleavened meal, in type responding to thy child-bearing, without being defiled by the seed of man, banishing from the food the bitterness of death; and then again, by efforts which transcended nature, rising superior to the natural elements in the Jordan, and thus exhibiting, in signs beforehand, the descent of our Lord into Hades, and His wonderful deliverance of those who were held fast in corruption. For all things yielded and succumbed to that divine image which prefigured thee. ³² X. But why do I digress, and lengthen out my discourse, giving it the rein with these varied illustrations, and that when the truth of thy matter stands like a column before the eye, in which it were better and more profitable to luxuriate and delight in? Wherefore, bidding adieu to the spiritual narrations and wondrous

deeds of the saints throughout all ages, I pass on to thee who art always to be had in remembrance, and who boldest the helm, as it were, of this festival.

³³ Blessed art thou, all-blessed, and to be desired of all. Blessed of the Lord is thy name, full of divine grace, and grateful exceedingly to God, mother of God, thou that givest light to the faithful. Thou art the circumscription, so to speak, of Him who cannot be circumscribed; the root of the most beautiful flower; the mother of the Creator; the nurse of the Nourisher; the circumference of Him who embraces all things; the upholder of Him who upholds all things by His word; the gate through which God appears in the flesh; the tongs of that cleansing coal; the bosom in small of that bosom which is all-containing; the fleece of wool, the mystery of which cannot be solved; the well of Bethlehem, that reservoir of life which David longed for, out of which the draught of immortality gushed forth; the mercy-seat from which God in human form was made known unto men; the spotless robe of Him who clothes Himself with light as with a garment. Thou hast lent to God, who stands in need of nothing, that flesh which He had not, in order that the Omnipotent might become that which it was his good pleasure to be. What is more splendid than this? What than this is more sublime? He who fills earth and heaven, whose are all things, has become in need of thee, for thou hast lent to God that flesh which He had not. Thou hast clad the Mighty One with that beauteous panoply of the body by which it has become possible for Him to be seen by mine eyes. And I, in order that I might freely approach to behold Him, have received that by which all the fiery darts of the wicked shall be quenched. Hail! hail! mother and handmaid of God. Hail! hail! thou to whom the great Creditor of all is a debtor. We are all debtors to God, but to thee He is Himself indebted.

³⁴ For He who said, "Honour thy father and thy mother," will have most assuredly, as Himself willing to be proved by such proofs, kept inviolate that grace, and His own decree towards her who ministered to Him that nativity to which He voluntarily stooped, and will have glorified with a divine honour her whom He, as being without a father, even as she was without a husband, Himself has written down as mother. Even so must these things be. For the hymns which we offer to thee, O thou most holy and admirable habitation of God, are no merely useless and ornamental words. Nor, again, is thy spiritual laudation mere secular trifling, or the shoutings of a false flattery, O thou who of God art praised; thou who to God gavest suck; who by

nativity givest unto mortals their beginning of being, but they are of clear and evident truth. But the time would fail us, ages and succeeding generations too, to render unto thee thy fitting salutation as the mother of the King Eternal, even as somewhere the illustrious prophet says, teaching us how incomprehensible thou art. How great is the house of God, and how large is the place of His possession! Great, and hath none end, high and unmeasurable. For verily, verily, this prophetic oracle, and most true saying, is concerning thy majesty; for thou alone hast been thought worthy to share with God the things of God; who hast alone borne in the flesh Him, who of God the Father was the Eternally and Only-Begotten. So do they truly believe who hold fast to the pure faith.

³⁵ XI. But for the time that remains, my most attentive hearers, let us take up the old man, the receiver of God, and our pious teacher, who hath put in here, as it were, in safety from that virginal sea, and let us refresh him, both satisfied as to his divine longing, and conveying to us this most blessed theology; and let us ourselves follow out the rest of our discourse, directing our course unerringly with reference to our prescribed end, and that under the guidance of God the Almighty, so shall we not be found altogether unfruitful and unprofitable as to what is required of us. When, then, to these sacred rites, prophecy and the priesthood had been jointly called, and that pair of just ones elected of God-Simeon, I mean, and Anna, bearing in themselves most evidently the images of both peoples-had taken their station by the side of that glorious and virginal throne,-for by the old man was represented the people of Israel, and the law now waxing old; whilst the widow represents the Church of the Gentiles, which had been up to this point a widow,-the old man, indeed, as personating the law, seeks dismissal; but the widow, as personating the Church, brought her joyous confession of faith and spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem, even as the things that were spoken of both have been appositely and excellently recorded, and quite in harmony with the sacred festival.

³⁶ For it was fitting and necessary that the old man who knew so accurately that decree of the law, in which it is said: Hear Him, and every soul that will not hearken unto Him shall be cut off from His people, should seek a peaceful discharge from the tutorship of the law; for in truth it were insolence and presumption, when the king is present and addressing the people, for one of his attendants to make a speech over against him, and that

to this man his subjects should incline their ears. It was necessary, too, that the widow who had been increased with gifts beyond measure, should in festal strains return her thanks to God; and so the things which there took place were agreeable to the law. But, for what remains, it is necessary to inquire how, since the prophetic types and figures bear, as has been shown, a certain analogy and relation to this prominent feast, it is said that the house was filled with smoke. Nor does the prophet say this incidentally, but with significance, speaking of that cry of the Thrice-Holy, uttered by the heavenly seraphs. You will discover the meaning of this, my attentive hearer, if you do but take up and examine what follows upon this narration: For hearing, he says, ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive.

³⁷ When, therefore, the foolish Jewish children had seen the glorious wonders which, as David sang, the Lord had performed in the earth, and had seen the sign from the depth and from the height meeting together, without division or confusion; as also Isaiah had before declared, namely, a mother beyond nature, and an offspring beyond reason; an earthly mother and a heavenly son; a new taking of man's nature, I say, by God, and a child-bearing without marriage; what in creation's circuit could be more glorious and more to be spoken of than this! yet when they had seen this it was all one as if they had not seen it; they closed their eyes, and in respect of praise were supine. Therefore the house in which they boasted was filled with smoke.

³⁸ XII. And in addition to this, when besides the spectacle, and even beyond the spectacle, they heard an old man, very righteous, very worthy of credit, worthy also of emulation, inspired by the Holy Spirit, a teacher of the law, honoured with the priesthood, illustrious in the gift of prophecy, by the hope which he had conceived of Christ, extending the limits of life, and putting off the debt of death-when they saw him, I say, leaping for joy, speaking words of good omen, quite transformed with gladness of heart, entirely rapt in a divine and holy ecstasy; who from a man had been changed into an angel by a godly change, and, for the immensity of his joy, chanted his hymn of thanksgiving, and openly proclaimed the "Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. Not even then were they willing to hear what was placed within their hearing, and held in veneration by the heavenly beings themselves; wherefore the house in which they boasted was filled with smoke. Now smoke is a sign and sure evidence of wrath; as it is written,

"There went up a smoke in His anger, and fire from His countenance devoured; " and in another place, "Amongst the disobedient people shall the fire burn," which plainly, in the revered Gospels, our Lord signified, when He said to the Jews, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. Also, in another place, "The king sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.

³⁹ Of such a nature was the adverse reward of the Jews for their unbelief, which caused them to refuse to pay to the Trinity the tribute of praise. For after that the ends of the earth were sanctified, and the mighty house of the Church was filled, by the proclamation of the Thrice Holy, with the glory of the Lord, as the great waters cover the seas, there happened to them the things which before had been declared, and the beginning of prophecy was confirmed by its issue, the preacher of truth signifying, as has been said, by the Holy Spirit, as it were in an example, the dreadful destruction which was to come upon them, in the words: "In the year in which king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord"-Uzziah, doubtless, as an apostate, being taken as the representative of the whole apostate body-the head of which he certainly was-who also, paying the penalty due to his presumption, carried on his forehead, as upon a brazen statue, the divine vengeance engraved, by the loathsomeness of leprosy, exhibiting to all the retribution of their loathsome impiety. Wherefore with divine wisdom did he, who had foreknowledge of these events, oppose the bringing in of the thankful Anna to the casting out of the ungrateful synagogue. Her very name also pre-signifies the Church, that by the grace of Christ and God is justified in baptism. For Anna is, by interpretation, grace.

⁴⁰ XIII. But here, as in port, putting in the vessel that bears the ensign of the cross, let us reef the sails of our oration, in order that it may be with itself commensurate. Only first, in as few words as possible, let us salute the city of the Great King together with the whole body of the Church, as being present with them in spirit, and keeping holy-day with the Father, and the brethren most held in honour there. Hail, thou city of the Great King, in which the mysteries of our salvation are consummated. Hail, thou heaven upon earth, Sion, the city that is for ever faithful unto the Lord. Hail, and shine thou Jerusalem, for thy light is come, the Light Eternal, the Light for ever enduring, the Light Supreme, the Light Immaterial, the Light of one substance with God and the Father, the Light which is in the Spirit, and in

which is the Father; the Light which illumines the ages; the Light which gives light to mundane and supramundane things, Christ our very God. Hail, city sacred and elect of the Lord. Joyfully keep thy festal days, for they will not multiply so as to wax old and pass away. Hail, thou city most happy, for glorious things are spoken of thee; thy priest shall be clothed with righteousness, and thy saints shall shout for joy, and thy poor shall be satisfied with bread. Hail! rejoice, O Jerusalem, for the Lord reigneth in the midst of thee.

⁴¹ That Lord, I say, who in His simple and immaterial Deity, entered our nature, and of the virgin's womb became ineffably incarnate; that Lord, who was partaker of nothing else save the lump of Adam, who was by the serpent tripped up. For the Lord laid not hold of the seed of angels -those, I say, who fell not away from that beauteous order and rank that was assigned to them from the beginning. To us He condescended, that Word who was always with the Father co-existent God. Nor, again, did He come into the world to restore; nor will He restore, as has been imagined by some impious advocates of the devil, those wicked demons who once fell from light; but when the Creator and Framer of all things had, as the most divine Paul says, laid hold of the seed of Abraham, and through him of the whole human race, He was made man for ever, and without change, in order that by His fellowship with us, and our joining on to Him, the ingress of sin into us might be stopped, its strength being broken by degrees, and itself as wax being melted, by that fire which the Lord, when He came, sent upon the earth. Hail to thee, thou Catholic Church, which hast been planted in all the earth, and do thou rejoice with us.

⁴² Fear not, little flock, the storms of the enemy for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, and that you should tread upon the necks of your enemies. Hail, and rejoice, thou that wast once barren, and without seed unto godliness, but who hast now many children of faith, Hail, thou people of the Lord, thou chosen generation, thou royal priesthood, thou holy nation, thou peculiar people-show forth His praises who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; and for His mercies glorify Him. ⁴³ XIV. Hail to thee for ever, thou virgin mother of God, our unceasing joy, for unto thee do I again return. Thou art the beginning of our feast; thou art its middle and end; the pearl of great price that belongeth unto the kingdom; the fat of every victim, the living altar of the bread of life.

Hail, thou treasure of the love of God. Hail, thou fount of the Son's love for man. Hail, thou overshadowing mount of the Holy Ghost. Thou gleamedst, sweet gift-bestowing mother, of the light of the sun; thou gleamedst with the insupportable fires of a most fervent charity, bringing forth in the end that which was conceived of thee before the beginning, making manifest the mystery hidden and unspeakable, the invisible Son of the Father—the Prince of Peace, who in a marvellous manner showed Himself as less than all littleness. Wherefore, we pray thee, the most excellent among women, who boastest in the confidence of thy maternal honours, that thou wouldest unceasingly keep us in remembrance. O holy mother of God, remember us, I say, who make our boast in thee, and who in hymns august celebrate the memory, which will ever live, and never fade away. And do thou also, O honoured and venerable Simeon, thou earliest host of our holy religion, and teacher of the resurrection of the faithful, be our patron and advocate with that Saviour God, whom thou wast deemed worthy to receive into thine arms.

⁴⁴ We, together with thee, sing our praises to Christ, who has the power of life and death, saying, Thou art the true Light, proceeding from the true Light; the true God, begotten of the true God; the one Lord, before Thine assumption of the humanity; that One nevertheless, after Thine assumption of it, which is ever to be adored; God of Thine own self and not by grace, but for our sakes also perfect man; in Thine own nature the King absolute and sovereign, but for us and for our salvation existing also in the form of a servant. yet immaculately and without defilement. For Thou who art incorruption hast come to set corruption free, that Thou mightest render all things uncorrupt. For Thine is the glory, and the power, and the greatness, and the majesty, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

Oration on the Psalms

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

ORATION ON THE PSALMS

1 I. Blessed be God; let us proceed, brethren, from wonders to the miracles of the Lord, and as it were, from strength to strength. For just as in a golden chain the links are so intimately joined and connected together, as that the one holds the other, and is fitted on to it, and so carries on the chain—even so the miracles that have been handed down by the holy Gospels, one after the other, lead on the Church of God, which delights in festivity, and refresh it, not with the meat that perisheth, but with that which endureth unto everlasting life. Come then, beloved, and let us, too, with prepared hearts, and with ears intent, listen to what the Lord our God shall say unto us out of the prophets and Gospels concerning this most sacred feast. Verily, He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, and to those which turn their hearts unto Him. To-day, the trumpet-blast of the prophets have roused the world, and have made glad and filled with joyfulness the churches of God that are everywhere amongst the nations. And, summoning the faithful from the exercise of holy fasting, and from the palaestra, wherein they struggle against the lusts of the flesh, they have taught them to sing a new hymn of conquest and a new song of peace to Christ who giveth the victory. Come then, every one, and let us rejoice in the Lord;

2 O come, all ye people, and let us clap our hands, and make a joyful noise to God our Saviour, with the voice of melody. Let no one be without portion in this grace; let no one come short of this calling; for the seed of the disobedient is appointed to destruction.—Let no one neglect to meet the King, lest he be shut out from the Bridegroom's chamber.—Let no one amongst us be found to receive Him with a sad countenance, lest he be condemned with

those wicked citizens-the citizens, I mean, who refused to receive the Lord as King over them. Let us all come together cheerfully; let us all receive Him gladly, and hold our feast with all honesty. Instead of our garments, let us strew our hearts before Him, In psalms and hymns, let us raise to Him our shouts of thanksgiving; and, without ceasing, let us exclaim, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; " for blessed are they that bless Him, and cursed are they that curse Him. Again I will say it, nor will I cease exhorting you to good, Come, beloved, let us bless Him who is blessed, that we may be ourselves blessed of Him. Every age and condition does this discourse summon to praise the Lord; kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth;

³both young men and maidens -and what is new in this miracle, the tender and innocent age of babes and sucklings hath obtained the first place in raising to God with thankful confession the hymn which was of God taught them in the strains in which Moses sang before to the people when they came forth out of Egypt-namely, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." ⁴II. To-day, holy David rejoices with great joy, being by babes despoiled of his lyre, with whom also, in spirit, leading the dance, and rejoicing together, as of old, before the ark of God, he mingles musical harmony, and sweetly lisps out in stammering voice, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Of whom shall we inquire? Tell us, O prophet, who is this that cometh in the name of the Lord? He will say it is not my part to-day to teach you, for He hath consecrated the school to infants, who hath out of the mouth of babes and sucklings perfected praise to destroy the enemy and the avenger, in order that by the miracle of these the hearts of the fathers might be turned to the children, and the disobedient unto the wisdom of the just. Tell us, then, O children, whence is this, your beautiful and graceful contest of song? Who taught it you? Who instructed you? Who brought you together? What were your tablets? Who were your teachers? Do but you, they say, join us as our companions in this song and festivity, and you will learn the things which were by Moses and the prophet earnestly longed for.

⁵Since then the children have invited us, and have given unto us the right hand of fellowship, let us come, beloved, and ourselves emulate that holy chorus, and with the apostles, let us make way for Him who ascends over the heaven of heavens towards the East, and who, of His good pleasure,

is upon the earth mounted upon an ass's colt. Let us, with the children, raise the branches aloft, and with the olive branches make glad applaud, that upon us also the Holy Spirit may breathe, and that in due order we may raise the God-taught strain: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. To-day, also, the patriarch Jacob keeps feast in spirit, seeing his prophecy brought to a fulfilment, and with the faithful adores the Father, seeing Him who bound his foal to the vine mounted upon an ass's colt. To-day the foal is made ready, the irrational exemplar of the Gentiles, who before were irrational, to signify the subjection of the people of the Gentiles; and the babes declare their former state of childhood, in respect of the knowledge of God, and their after perfecting, by the worship of God and the exercise of the true religion. To-day, according to the prophet, is the King of Glory glorified upon earth, and makes us, the inhabitants of earth, partakers of the heavenly feast, that He may show himself to be the Lord of both, even as He is hymned with the common praises of both.

6 Therefore it was that the heavenly hosts sang, announcing salvation upon earth, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. And those below, joining in harmony with the joyous hymns of heaven, cried: "Hosanna in the highest; Hosanna to the Son of David. In heaven the doxology was raised, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place; " and on earth was this caught tip in the words, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." 7 III. But while these things were doing, and the disciples were rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest; the city began to inquire, saying, Who is this? stirring up its hardened and inveterate envy against the glory of the Lord. But when thou hearest me say the city, understand the ancient and disorderly multitude of the synagogue. They ungratefully and malignantly ask, Who is this? as if they had never yet seen their Benefactor, and Him whom divine miracles, beyond the power of man, had made famous and renowned; for the darkness comprehended not that unsetting light which shone in upon it. Hence quite appositely with respect to them hath the prophet Isaiah exclaimed, saying, Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. And who is blind, but my children? and deaf, but they that have the dominion over them? And the servants of the Lord have become blind; ye have often seen, but ye observed not; your ears are

opened, yet ye hear not. See, beloved, how accurate are these words; how the Divine Spirit, who Himself sees beforehand into the future, has by His saints foretold of things future as if they were present. For these thankless men saw, and by means of His miracles handled the wonder-working God, and yet remained in unbelief.

8 They saw a man, blind from his birth, proclaiming to them the God who had restored his sight. They saw a paralytic, who had grown up, as it were, and become one with his infirmity, at His bidding loosed from his disease. They saw Lazarus, who was made an exile from the region of death. They heard that He had walked on the sea. They heard of the wine that, without previous culture, was ministered; of the bread that was eaten at that spontaneous banquet; they heard that the demons had been put to flight; the sick restored to health. Their very streets proclaimed His deeds of wonder; their roads declared His healing power to those who journeyed on them. All Judea was filled with His benefit; yet now, when they hear the divine praises, they inquire, Who is this? O the madness of these falsely-named teachers! O incredulous fathers! O foolish seniors! O seed of the shameless Canaan, and not of Judah the devout! The children acknowledge their Creator, but their unbelieving parents said, Who is this? The age that was young and inexperienced sang praises to God, while they that had waxen old in wickedness inquired, Who is this? Sucklings praise His Divinity, while seniors utter blasphemies; children piously offer the sacrifice of praise, whilst profane priests are impiously indignant.

9 IV. O ye disobedient as regards the wisdom of the just, turn your hearts to your children. Learn the mysteries of God; the very thing itself which is being done bears witness that it is God that is thus hymned by uninstructed tongues. Search the Scriptures, as ye have heard from the Lord; for they are they which testify of Him, and be not ignorant of this miracle. Hear ye men without grace, and thankless, what good tidings the prophet Zechariah brings to you. He says, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; behold thy King cometh unto thee: just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon the foal of an ass. Why do ye repel the joy? Why, when the sun shineth, do ye love darkness? Why do ye against unconquerable peace meditate war? If, therefore, ye be the sons of Zion, join in the dance together with your children. Let the religious service of your children be to you a pretext for joy. Learn from them who was their Teacher; who called them together; whence was

the doctrine; what means this new theology and old prophecy. And if no man hath taught them this, but of their own accord they raise the hymn of praise, then recognise the work of God, even as it is written in the law: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise.

¹⁰ Redouble, therefore, your joy, that you have been made the fathers of such children who, under the teaching of God, have celebrated with their praises things unknown to their seniors. Turn your hearts to your children, and close not your eyes against the truth. But if you remain the same, and hearing, hear not, and seeing, perceive not, and to no purpose dissent from your children, then shall they be your judges according to the Saviour's word. Well, therefore, even this thing also, together with others, has the prophet Isaiah spoken before of you, saying, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when they see their children doing my works, they shall for me sanctify My name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn obedience, and the stammering tongues shall learn to speak peace. Seest thou, O foolish Jew, how from the beginning of his discourse, the prophet declares confusion to you because of your unbelief. Learn even from him how he proclaims the God-inspired hymn of praise that is raised by your children, even as the blessed David hath declared beforehand; saying, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise. Either then,-as is right,-claim the piety of your children for your own, or devoutly give your children unto us.

¹¹ We with them will lead the dance, and to the new glory will sing in concert the divinely-inspired hymn. ¹² V. Once, indeed, the aged Simeon met the Saviour and received in his arms, as an infant, the Creator of the world, and proclaimed Him to be Lord and God; but now, in the place of foolish elders, children meet the Saviour, even as Simeon did, and instead of their arms, strew under Him the branches of trees, and bless the Lord God seated upon a colt, as upon the cherubim, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; and together with these let us also exclaim, Blessed is He that cometh, God the King of Glory, who, for our sakes, became poor, yet, in His own proper estate, being ignorant of poverty, that with His bounty He might make us rich. Blessed is He who once came in humility, and who will hereafter come again in glory: at the first, lowly, and seated upon an ass's colt, and by infants extolled in order

that it might be fulfilled which was written: Thy goings have been seen, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary; but at the second time seated on the clouds, in terrible majesty, by angels and powers attended. O the mellifluous tongue of the children! O the sincere doctrine of those who are well pleasing to God! David in prophecy hid the spirit under the letter; children, opening their treasures, brought forth riches upon their tongues, and, in language full of grace, invited clearly all men to enjoy them.

¹³ Therefore let us with them draw forth the unfading riches. In our bosoms insatiate, and in treasure-houses which cannot be filled, let us lay up the divine gifts. Let us exclaim without ceasing, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Very God, in the name of the Very God, the Omnipotent from the Omnipotent, the Son in the name of the Father. The true King from the true King, whose kingdom, even as His who begat Him, is with eternity, coeval and pre-existent to it. For this is common to both; nor does the Scripture attribute this honour to the Son, as if it came from another source, nor as if it had a beginning, or could be added to or diminished-away with the thought!-but as that which is His of right by nature, and by a true and proper possession. For the kingdom of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is one, even as their substance is one and their dominion one. Whence also, with one and the same adoration, we worship the one Deity in three Persons, subsisting without beginning, uncreate, without end, and to which there is no successor. For neither will the Father ever cease to be the Father, nor again the Son to be the Son and King, nor the Holy Ghost to be what in substance and personality He is. For nothing of the Trinity will suffer diminution, either in respect of eternity, or of communion, or of sovereignty.

¹⁴ For not on that account is the Son of God called king, because for our sakes He was made man, and in the flesh cast down the tyrant that was against us, having, by taking this upon Him, obtained the victory over its cruel enemy, but because He is always Lord and God; therefore it is that now, both after His assumption of the flesh and for ever, He remains a king, even as He who begat Him. Speak not, O heretic, against the kingdom of Christ, lest thou dishonour Him who begat Him. If thou art faithful, in faith approach Christ, our very Cod, and not as using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. If thou art a servant, with trembling be subject unto thy Master; for he who fights against the Word is not a well-disposed servant, but a

manifest enemy, as it is written: He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.

15 VI. But let us, beloved, return in our discourse to that point whence we digressed, exclaiming, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: that good and kind Shepherd, voluntarily to lay down His life for His sheep. That just as hunters take by a sheep the wolves that devour sheep, even so the Chief Shepherd, offering Himself as man to the spiritual wolves and those who destroy the soul, may make His prey of the destroyers by means of that Adam who was once preyed on by them. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: God against the devil; not manifestly in His might, which cannot be looked on, but in the weakness of the flesh, to bind the strong man that is against us. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: the King against the tyrant; not with omnipotent power and wisdom, but with that which is accounted the foolishness of the cross, which hath reft his spoils from the serpent who is wise in wickedness. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: the True One against the liar; the Saviour against the destroyer; the Prince of Peace against him who stirs up wars; the Lover of mankind against the hater of mankind. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: the Lord to have mercy upon the creature of His hands. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord:

16 the Lord to save man who had wandered in error; to put away error; to give light to those who are in darkness; to abolish the imposture of idols; in its place to bring in the saving knowledge of God; to sanctify the world; to drive away the abomination and misery of the worship of false gods. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: the one for the many; to deliver the poor out of the hands of them that are too strong for him, yea, the poor and needy from him that spoileth him. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, to pour wine and oil upon him who had fallen amongst thieves, and had been passed by. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: to save us by Himself, as says the prophet; no ambassador, nor angel, but the Lord Himself saved us. Therefore we also bless Thee, O Lord; Thou with the Father and the Holy Spirit art blessed before the worlds and for ever. Before the world, indeed, and until now being devoid of body, but now and for ever henceforth possessed of that divine humanity which cannot be changed, and from which Thou art never divided.

17 VII. Let us look also at what follows. What says the most divine evangelist? When the Lord had entered into the temple, the blind and the lame came to Him; and He healed them. And when the chief priests and Pharisees saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, they brooked not this honour that was paid Him, and therefore they came to Him, and thus spake, Hearst Thou not what these say? As if they said, Art Thou not grieved at hearing from these innocents things which befit God, and God alone? Has not God of old made it manifest by the prophet, "My glory will I not give unto another; " and how dost Thou, being a man, make Thyself God? But what to this answers the long-suffering One, He who is abundant in mercy, and slow to wrath? He bears with these frenzied ones; with an apology He keeps their wrath in check; in His turn He calls the Scriptures to their remembrance; He brings forward testimony to what is done, and shrinks not from inquiry. Wherefore He says, Have ye never heard Me saying by the prophet, Then shall ye know that I am He that doth speak? nor again, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger?

18 Which without doubt are ye, who give heed unto the law, and read the prophets, while yet ye despise Me who, both by the law and the prophets, have been beforehand proclaimed. Ye think, indeed, under a pretence of piety, to avenge the glory of God, not understanding that he that despiseth Me despiseth My Father also. I came forth from God, and am come into the world, and My glory is the glory of My Father also. Even thus these foolish ones, being convinced by our Saviour-God, ceased to answer Him again, the truth stopping their mouths; but adopting a new and foolish device, they took counsel against Him. But let us sing, Great is our Lord, and great is His power; and of His understanding there is no number. For all this was done that the Lamb and Son of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, might, of His own will, and for us, come to His saving Passion, and might be recognised, as it were, in the market and place of selling; and that those who bought Him might for thirty pieces of silver covenant for Him who, with His life-giving blood, was to redeem the world; and that Christ, our passover, might be sacrificed for us, in order that those who were sprinkled with

His precious blood, and sealed on their lips, as the posts of the door, might escape from the darts of the destroyer;

¹⁹and that Christ having thus suffered in the flesh, and having risen again the third day, might, with equal honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be by all created things equally adored; for to Him every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, sending up glory to Him, for ever and ever. Amen.

Fragments on Jonah and on Things Created

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

INTRODUCTION

On the History of Jonah. — From the Book on the Resurrection.

1 I. The history of Jonah contains a great mystery. For it seems that the whale signifies Time, which never stands still, but is always going on, and consumes the things which are made by long and shorter intervals. But Jonah, who fled from the presence of God, is himself the first man who, having transgressed the law, fled from being seen naked of immortality, having lost through sin his confidence in the Deity. And the ship in which he embarked, and which was tempest-tossed, is this brief and hard life in the present time; just as though we had turned and removed from that blessed and secure life, to that which was most tempestuous and unstable, as from solid land to a ship. For what a ship is to the land, that our present life is to that which is immortal. And the storm and the tempests which beat against us are the temptations of this life, which in the world, as in a tempestuous sea, do not permit us to have a fair voyage free from pain, in a calm sea, and one which is free from evils. And the casting of Jonah from the ship into the sea, signifies the fall of the first man from life to death, who received that sentence because, through having sinned, he fell from righteousness: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And his being swallowed by the whale signifies our inevitable removal by time. For the belly in which Jonah, when he was swallowed, was concealed, is the all-receiving earth, which receives all things which are consumed by time.

2 II. As, then, Jonah spent three days and as many nights in the whale's belly, and was delivered up sound again, so shall we all, who have passed

through the three stages of our present life on earth-I mean the beginning, the middle, and the end, of which all this present time consists-rise again. For there are altogether three intervals of time, the past, the future, and the present. And for this reason the Lord spent so many days in the earth symbolically, thereby teaching clearly that when the fore-mentioned intervals of time have been fulfilled, then shall come our resurrection, which is the beginning of the future age, and the end of this. For in that age there is neither past nor future, but only the present. Moreover, Jonah having spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, was not destroyed by his flesh being dissolved, as is the case with that natural decomposition which takes place in the belly, in the case of those meats which enter into it, on account of the greater heat in the liquids, that it might be shown that these bodies of ours may remain undestroyed. For consider that God had images of Himself made as of gold, that is of a purer spiritual substance, as the angels; and others of clay or brass, as ourselves. He united the soul which was made in the image of God to that which was earthy.

3 As, then, we must here honour all the images of a king, on account of the form which is in them, so also it is incredible that we who are the images of God should be altogether destroyed as being without honour. Whence also the Word descended into our world, and was incarnate of our body, in order that, having fashioned it to a more divine image, He might raise it incorrupt, although it had been dissolved by time. And, indeed, when we trace out the dispensation which was figuratively set forth by the prophet, we shall find the whole discourse visibly extending to this.

Extracts from the Work on Things Created.

4 I. This selection is made, by way of compendium or synopsis, from the work of the holy martyr and bishop Methodius, concerning things created. The passage, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine," is explained by Origen as signifying that the pearls are the more mystical teachings of our God-given religion, and the swine those who roll in impiety and in all kinds of pleasures, as swine do in mud; for he said that it was taught by these words of Christ not to cast about the divine teachings, inasmuch as they could not bear them who were held by impiety and brutal pleasures. The great Methodius says: If we must understand by pearls the glorious and divine teachings, and by swine those who are given up to impiety and pleasures, from whom are to be withheld and hidden the

apostle's teachings, which stir men up to piety and faith in Christ, see how you say that no Christians can be converted from their impiety by the teachings of the apostles. For they would never cast the mysteries of Christ to those who, through want of faith, are like swine. Either, therefore, these things were cast before all the Greeks and other unbelievers, and were preached by the disciples of Christ, and converted them from impiety to the faith of Christ, as we believers certainly confess, and then the words, "Cast not your pearls before swine," can no longer mean what has been said;

5 or meaning this, we must say that faith in Christ and deliverance from impiety have been accorded to none of the unbelievers, whom we compare to swine, by the apostolic instructions enlightening their souls like pearls. But this is blasphemous. Therefore the pearls in this place are not to be taken to mean the deepest doctrines, and the swine the impious; nor are we to understand the words, "Cast not your pearls before swine," as forbidding us to cast before the impious and unbelieving the deep and sanctifying doctrines of faith in Christ; but we must take the pearls to mean virtues, with which the soul is adorned as with precious pearls; and not to cast them before swine, as meaning that we are not to cast these virtues, such as chastity, temperance, righteousness, and truth, that we are not to cast these to impure pleasures, for these are like swine, lest they, fleeing from the virtues, cause the soul to live a swinish and a vicious life.

6 II. Origen says that what he calls the Centaur is the universe which is co-eternal with the only wise and independent God. For he says, since there is no workman without some work, or maker without something made, so neither is there an Almighty without an object of His power. For the workman must be so called from his work, and the maker from what he makes, and the Almighty Ruler from that which He rules over. And so it must be, that these things were made by God from the beginning, and that there was no time in which they did not exist. For if there was a time when the things that are made did not exist, then, as there were no things which had been made, so there was no maker; which you see to be an impious conclusion. And it will result that the unchangeable and unaltered God has altered and changed. For if He made the universe later, it is clear that He passed from not making to making. But this is absurd in connection with what has been said. It is impossible, therefore, to say that the universe is not unbeginning and co-eternal with God. To whom the saint replies, in the person of another

er, asking, "Do you not consider God the beginning and fountain of wisdom and glory, and in short of all virtue in substance and not by acquisition? ""Certainly," he says. "And what besides? Is He not by Himself perfect and independent? ""True;

7 for it is impossible that he who is independent should have his independence from another. For we must say, that all which is full by another is also imperfect. For it is the thing which has its completeness of itself, and in itself alone, which can alone be considered perfect. "You say most truly. For would you pronounce that which is neither by itself complete, nor its own completeness, to be independent? ""By no means For that which is perfect through anything else must needs be in itself imperfect. "Well, then shall God be considered perfect by Himself, and not by some other? ""Most rightly. "Then God is something different from the world, and the world from God? "Quite so. "We must not then say that God is perfect, and Creator, and Almighty, through the world? ""No; for He must surely by Himself, and not by the world, and that changeable, be found perfect by Himself. "Quite so. "But you will say that the rich man is called rich on account of his riches? And that the wise man is called wise not as being wisdom itself, but as being a possessor of substantial wisdom? ""Yes. "Well, then, since God is something different from the world, shall He be called on account of the world rich, and beneficent, and Creator? "By no means. Away with such a thought! Well, then, He is His own riches, and is by Himself rich and powerful. "So it seems. "He was then before the world altogether independent, being Father, and Almighty, and Creator;

8 so that He by Himself, and not by another, was this. "It must be so. "Yes; for if He were acknowledged to be Almighty on account of the world, and not of Himself, being distinct from the world,-may God forgive the words, which the necessity of the argument requires,-He would by Himself be imperfect and have need of these things, through which He is marvellously Almighty and Creator. We must not then admit this pestilent sin of those who say concerning God, that He is. Almighty and Creator by the things which He controls and creates, which are changeable, and I that He is not so by Himself. 9 III. Now consider it thus: "If, you say, the world was created later, not existing before, then we must change the passionless and unchangeable God; for it must needs be, that he who did nothing before, but afterwards, passes from not doing to doing, changes and is altered." Then I

said, "Did God rest from making the world, or not?" "He rested." "Because otherwise it would not have been completed." "True." "If, then, the act of making, after not making, makes an alteration in God, does not His ceasing to make after making the same?" "Of necessity." "But should you say that He is altered as not doing to-day, from what He was, when He was doing?" "By no means. There is no necessity for His being changed, when He makes the world from what He was when He was not making it; and neither is there any necessity for saying that the universe must have co-existed with Him, on account of our not being forced to say that He has changed, nor that the universe is co-eternal with Him."

10 IV. But speak to me thus: "Should you call that a thing created which had no beginning of its creation?" "Not at all." "But if there is no beginning of its creation, it is of necessity uncreated. But if it was created, you will grant that it was created by some cause. For it is altogether impossible that it should have a beginning without a cause." "It is impossible." "Shall we say, then, that the world and the things which are in it, having come into existence and formerly not existing, are from any other cause than God?" "It is plain that they are from God." "Yes; for it is impossible that that which is limited by an existence which has a beginning should be co-existent with the infinite." "It is impossible." "But again, O Centaur, let us consider it from the beginning. Do you say that the things which exist were created by Divine knowledge or not?" "Oh, begone, they will say; not at all." "Well, but was it from the elements, or from matter, or the firmaments, or however you choose to name them, for it makes no difference; these things existing beforehand uncreated and borne along in a state of chaos; did God separate them and reduce them all to order, as a good painter who forms one picture out of many colours?" "No, nor yet this." For they will quite avoid making a concession against themselves, lest agreeing that there was a beginning of the separation and transformation of matter, they should be forced in consistency to say, that in all things God began the ordering and adorning of matter which hitherto had been without form.

11 V. But come now, since by the favour of God we have arrived at this point in our discourse; let us suppose a beautiful statue standing upon its base; and that those who behold it, admiring its harmonious beauty, differ among themselves, some trying to make out that it had been made, others that it had not. I should ask them: For what reason do you say that it was not made?

on account of the artist, because he must be considered as never resting from his work? or on account of the statue itself? If it is on account of the artist, how could it, as not being made, be fashioned by the artist? But if, when it is moulded of brass, it has all that is needed in order that it may receive whatever impression the artist chooses, how can that be said not to be made which submits to and receives his labour?

¹² If, again, the statue is declared to be by itself perfect and not made, and to have no need of art, then we must allow, in accordance with that pernicious heresy, that it is self-made. If perhaps they are unwilling to admit this argument, and reply more inconsistently, that they do not say that the figure was not made, but that it was always made, so that there was no beginning of its being made, so that artist might be said to have this subject of his art without any beginning. Well then, my friends, we will say to them, if no time, nor any age before can be found in the past, when the statue was not perfect, will you tell us what the artist contributed to it, or wrought upon it? For if this statue has need of nothing, and has no beginning of existence, for this reason, according to you, a maker never made it, nor will any maker be found. And so the argument seems to come again to the same conclusion, and we must allow that it is self-made. For if all artificer is said to have moved a statue ever so slightly, he will submit to a beginning, when he began to move and adorn that which was before unadorned and unmoved. But the world neither was nor will be for ever the same. Now we must compare the artificer to God, and the statue to the world.

¹³ But how then, O foolish men, can you imagine the creation to be co-eternal with its Artificer, and to have no need of an artificer? For it is of necessity that tim co-eternal should never have had a beginning of being, and should be equally uncreated and powerful with Him. But the uncreated appears to be in itself perfect and unchangeable, and it will have need of nothing, and be free from corruption. And if this be so, the world can no longer be, as you say it is, capable of change. ¹⁴ VI. He says that the Church is so called from being called out with respect to pleasures. VII. The saint says: We said there are two kinds of formative power in what we have now acknowledged; the one which works by itself what it chooses, not out of things which already exist, by its bare will, without delay, as soon as it wills. This is the power of the Father. The other which adorns and embellishes, by imitation of the former, the things which already exist. This is the power of the

Son, the almighty and powerful hand of the Father, by which, after creating matter not out of things which were already in existence, He adorns it.

¹⁵ VIII. The saint says that the Book of Job is by Moses. He says, concerning the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," that one will not err who says that the "Beginning" is Wisdom. For Wisdom is said by one of the Divine band to speak in this manner concerning herself: "The Lord created me the beginning of His ways for His works: of old He laid my formulation." It was fitting and more seemly that all things which came into existence, should be more recent than Wisdom, since they existed through her. Now consider whether the saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God;" — whether these statements be not in agreement with those. For we must say that the Beginning, out of which the most upright Word came forth, is the Father and Maker of all things, in whom it was. And the words, "The same was in the beginning with God," seem to indicate the position of authority of the Word, which He had with the Father before the world came into existence; "beginning" signifying His power. And so, after the peculiar unbeginning beginning, who is the Father, He is the beginning of other things, by whom all things are made.

¹⁶ IX. He says that Origen, after having fabled many things concerning the eternity of the universe, adds this also: Nor yet from Adam, as some say, did man, previously not existing, first take his existence and come into the world. Nor again did the world begin to be made six days before the creation of Adam. But if any one should prefer to differ in these points, let him first say, whether a period of time be not easily reckoned from the creation of the world, according to the Book of Moses, to those who so receive it, the voice of prophecy here proclaiming: "Thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.... For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night." For when a thousand years are reckoned as one day in the sight of God, and from the creation of the world to His rest is six days, so also to our time, six days are defined, as those say who are clever arithmeticians. Therefore, they say that an age of six thousand years extends from Adam to our time. For they say that the judgment will come on the seventh day, that is in the seventh thousand years. Therefore, all the days from our time to that which was in the beginning, in which God created the heaven and the earth, are computed to be thirteen days; before which God,

because he had as yet created nothing according to their folly, is stripped of His name of Father and Almighty. But if there are thirteen days in the sight of God from the creation of the world, how can Wisdom say, in the Book of the Son of Sirach: "Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity?" This is what Origen says seriously, and mark how he trifles.

I.

This, in truth, must be called most excellent and praiseworthy, which God Himself considers excellent, even if it be despised and scoffed at by all. For things are not what men think them to be.

II.

Then repentance effaces every sin, when there is no delay after the fall of the soul, and the disease is not suffered to go on through a long interval. For then evil will not have power to leave its mark in us, when it is drawn up at the moment of its being set down like a plant newly planted.

III.

¹ In truth, our evil comes out of our want of resemblance to God, and our ignorance of Him; and, on the other hand, our great good consists in our resemblance to Him. And, therefore, our conversion and faith in the Being who is incorruptible and divine, seems to be truly our proper good, and ignorance and disregard of Him our evil; if, at least, those things which are produced in us and of us, being the evil effects of sin, are to be considered ours.

From His Discourse Concerning Martyrs.

² For martyrdom is so admirable and desirable, that the Lord, the Son of God Himself, honouring it, testified, "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," that might honour man to whom He descended with this gift.

Fragments: Against Porphyry, On Created Things, On Job, On Martyrs

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

c. AD 290–311

Greek fragments of works by Methodius, bishop of Olympus and a critic of Origen, that survive only in quotation: his reply to Porphyry's attack on Christianity, an extract from his book *On Created Things* preserved by Photius, comments on Job, and a fragment on martyrs. We found no complete English translation of these Greek remains.

AGAINST PORPHYRY

SECTION 1

¹ The Son of God, Christ, came to live in the visible creation at the Father's command. He came to overthrow the power of the tyrannical demons and to rescue souls from bitter slavery. For human nature had been bewitched by the drinks of injustice and was filled with disorder and confusion. It was no longer able to run back to the remembrance of what was good for it. ² So human nature was easily dragged off to idols. Evil had flooded over everything and spread through every generation. This came from the change that disobedience had brought upon our tents of flesh. Then the Lord Christ appeared in the life of men and dimmed the assaults of pleasure, with which the powers below had armed themselves to enslave our mind. In this way he showed that man is free from every evil. ³ For this reason the Lord Jesus put on flesh, became man, and was nailed to the cross as part of the plan. The demons had boasted that they were gods through that same flesh. They had hooked souls for death by deceitful methods. Now through that same flesh they would be overthrown and exposed as no gods at all.

⁴ He became man to stop their boasting from growing any further. Through a body they had alienated the rational race from the worship of the God who truly is, and had ruined it. Through a body, then, the Word made

room for himself by unspeakable arts of wisdom, so that they would be proved destroyers of souls and not benefactors. ⁵ Now it was no great marvel for the Christ of God to terrify the opposing natures of the demons with the greatness of his unchanging power. But that would only have brought them pain, though they would rather have been beaten by one who was stronger. For this reason he arranged the way of salvation for all through a man. The life itself and the truth took up residence among men in bodily form. So men were able to run back to their true shape and to the enlightenment of the Word, away from the charms of sin. And the demons, defeated by one weaker than themselves and despised, would give up their boldness, bound in the fever of their rage like Typhon.

⁶ This above all is why the cross was brought in. It was set up as a trophy against injustice and as a thing of terror. So from then on man would no longer be liable to wrath. He had wrestled back the defeat that came through disobedience. He had lawfully conquered the powers below, and by God's gifts had been shown free of every debt. For in this way the firstborn Word of God fenced man in with the weapons of righteousness, the man in whom he had taken up his tent. He overcame the powers that had enslaved us by the shape of the cross, as I said. He showed that the man who had been ruled by corruption was free, with his hands stretched out. ⁷ For this shape, if one must define it, is the strength of victory. It is God's coming down to man. It is a trophy against the material spirits. It is release from death. It is the starting point of the ascent to the true day, and a stairway for those who are eager to enjoy the light there. It is a machine by which those who are fit for the building of the church are lifted up from below, like a squared stone, to be fitted into the divine Word.

⁸ For this reason the kings of this world noticed that the shape of the cross is used to scatter every evil condition, and so they devised what are called in the Roman language "vexilla" (standards). So too the sea yields to this shape and offers itself to men for sailing. The whole creation, one might say, is clothed with this sign for freedom. Birds flying high suggest the cross-shape by the spread of their wings. And man himself, when he stretches out his hands, appears to be nothing other than this. ⁹ So the Lord took this very form, with which man had been adorned from his making, and mixed it with divinity. The purpose was that man should henceforth be an instrument and a temple of God, freed from all discord and disorder. ¹⁰ Once man had

been tuned to godliness and had fitted into himself the pure melody of truth, through which he took in the divinity, he was fastened to the tree of life like strings and tension pegs. After that it is no longer possible for him to fall into disharmony and ruin.

SECTION 2

1... For this was within his power. It belongs to power to contract in what is few and to be made small, and to pour out in what is great and to be made great. But if he were able to stretch along with great things and be made equal to them, yet unable to be made small in small things and to contract, it would not be power. 2 If you say that one thing is possible to a power and another impossible, you strike out its claim to be a power at all, since it is weak in the things it cannot do. Nor, in that case, would it have any superiority of deity over things that change. For human beings and animals that crawl on the ground act in the things they are able to do, and fail in the things they cannot. For this reason the Son of God was received in a human being all the more, because this was not impossible for him. By power he suffered while remaining beyond suffering, and he died while securing immortality for the mortal.

3 When one body is struck or cut by another body, it is struck or cut only as far as the thing that strikes or cuts reaches. The blow happens because the body underneath pushes back against the one striking, so that both the one acting and the one acted upon are equally affected. Certainly, if the thing being cut does not resist the cutting thing with a little firmness, the cutting thing will not be able to cut. 4 When the body underneath does not stand against the swing of the sword but gives way to it, the action accomplishes nothing. The same is true of finer bodies such as fire or air, for in these the thrust of more solid bodies is spent and has no effect. Now if stone, iron, wood or anything else that people use to kill one another cannot wound or divide fire or air, because it is of a yielding and finer nature, how much more did Wisdom remain unwounded and unable to suffer? Wisdom was harmed by nothing from anyone, even though it was present with a body that was being cut and nailed. After God who begot it, it is better and purer than every nature.

SECTION 3

¹ Some people think that God also, measuring him by the standard of their own disposition, considers the same things praiseworthy or blameworthy as the worthless do, as though he used the opinions of human beings as a rule and measure. They fail to understand, because of the ignorance in them, that all creation is lacking in the beauty of God. ² For he draws all things to life by his own Word, out of the whole of every substance and nature. If he wills the good, he is himself the good and remains in himself. If it is the beautiful that he loves, then he, who alone is beautiful, looks to himself, and counts as nothing the things human beings admire. For that must truly be called most beautiful and praiseworthy which God himself judges to be beautiful, even if everyone despises and mocks it. It is not what human beings suppose.

³ So if through this very form he wished to set souls free from the passions that destroy through anger, putting the crowds of demons to shame, then we ought to accept it and not speak ill of it. We should see that it was given as a liberation and a release from the chains that were forged for us by disobedience. ⁴ For the Word suffered in the flesh, nailed to the cross, in order to stretch out the human being who had been numbed by error. By the tree of life he raised him up to the divine greatness above, from which he had earlier been driven out. By this form the passions are dulled, since he became the suffering of sufferings through suffering, and the death of death through dying. He was not overpowered by death, nor pained by suffering. ⁵ For no suffering at all unsettled him, and death did not harm him. In the one who could suffer he remained beyond suffering, and in the mortal he was immortal. He took hold of everything, the air, the middle and the heights, and mixed the mortal with immortal deity. Death was completely defeated, as the flesh was raised up on the cross as an imprint of incorruption.

SECTION 4

Repentance blots out every sin when it allows no delay after the soul's fall has happened, and does not put the passion off to some later time. For then the evil will have no way to leave a trace in us, since it is torn out the moment it takes hold, like a plant that has only just been planted.

SECTION 5

Our own evil is truly unlikeness to God and ignorance of him. And how great, on the other hand, is the good of being made like him! It is clear that

the good which is truly our own is turning to the incorruptible and divine, and faith in him. The evil is ignorance of him and carelessness toward him, if it is true that what grows in us and out of us is our own, and that these things produce wickedness.

ON CREATED THINGS

SECTION 1

¹ Concerning the saying “do not throw what is holy to the dogs, nor your pearls before the pigs”: Xenon takes the “pearls” to be the more mystical teachings of the God-given religion. The “pigs” he takes to be those who, in ungodliness and every kind of pleasure, still wallow in the mire like pigs. He said that Christ spoke this to forbid casting the divine teachings to such people, because they cannot bear them, being already held fast by ungodliness and savage pleasures. The great Methodius says: If the “pearls” must be understood as the solemn and divine teachings, and the “pigs” as those who live with ungodliness and pleasures, so that the apostolic preaching which stirs people to godliness and faith in Christ must be hidden from them, then see what follows. You are saying that the apostles’ preaching has turned no Christian away from his former ungodliness. For the apostles would never have cast the mysteries of Christ before people who, through unbelief, are like pigs.

² Either these teachings were cast before all the Greeks and the other unbelievers by Christ’s disciples and were preached to them, and turned them from ungodliness to faith in Christ, as we who believe also confess. In that case the words “do not throw your pearls before the pigs” can no longer be understood as was said. Or, if the saying is understood as was said, we must claim that no unbeliever, whom we compare to pigs, has come to faith in Christ and freedom from ungodliness through the apostolic teachings, which light up souls like pearls. But that is blasphemy. ³ So the “pearls” here must not be taken as the more mystical teachings, nor the “pigs” as the ungodly, nor should “do not throw your pearls before the pigs” be taken to mean “do not cast the mystical, perfecting teachings of faith in Christ before the ungodly and unbelieving.” Rather, the “pearls” are to be understood as the virtues, with which the soul is adorned as with costly pearls. And “not casting them before the pigs” means not casting the virtues themselves, such as purity, self-control, justice and truth, before the lustful pleasures. For these

are like pigs, lest they devour the virtues and so make the soul live a swinish life, tossed about by many passions.

SECTION 2

¹ Origen, whom he calls the Centaur, said that the universe is co-eternal with God, who alone is wise and in need of nothing. For he claimed: If God is not a craftsman without things crafted, or a maker without things made, nor almighty without things he rules (for a craftsman must be called so because of what he has crafted, a maker because of what he has made, and the Almighty because of what is ruled), then these things must have been made by God from the beginning, and there was no time when they did not exist. For if there was a time when the things made did not exist, then, since without things made there is no maker, see what ungodly consequence follows. ² It would also follow that God, who is unchangeable and unalterable, is altered and changed. For if he made the universe later, it is clear that he changed from not making to making. But that is absurd, in view of what was said before. So it is not possible to say that the universe is not without beginning and co-eternal with God.

SECTION 3

¹ The holy man, questioning through another speaker, says to him: Do you consider God to be the source of wisdom and glory and, in short, of every virtue, and so by his very being and not by acquisition? He answers: Yes. And what more? Is he not wholly perfect through himself, and in need of nothing? True. For it is impossible that what needs nothing should be needy of nothing because of something else? Impossible. For everything that is so because of another must be called deficient and incomplete? Necessarily. For that which exists through itself, being its own fullness and remaining in itself, is the only thing to be judged perfect? You speak most truly. ² But would you say that what is neither through itself nor its own fullness is in need of nothing? By no means. Then God will not be considered perfect because of anything else. For what is perfect because of something else must in itself be imperfect. Necessarily.

³ Then God himself will be reckoned perfect through himself, and not through anything else? Quite right. The world is one thing in relation to God, and God another in relation to the world? Entirely. So we must not say that God is perfect, or craftsman, or almighty, because of the world? No. So

that God would be found perfect through himself and not through the world, and that although [the world] is changeable. Fittingly. ⁴ “What about this? Do we call a rich man rich because of his wealth?” “Correct.” “And do we call a wise man wise by sharing in essential wisdom, since he is not himself wisdom?” “Yes.” “Well then, God is other than the world. Should we call him rich, benefactor and creator on account of the world?” “Away with the thought! Certainly not.” “Then he is his own wealth, and he is rich and powerful through himself?” “It seems so.”

⁵ “Then even before the world, he was altogether in need of nothing, and was Father, Almighty and Creator, so that he was these things through himself and not through something other than himself?” “Necessarily.” ⁶ “For suppose God were known as Almighty because of the world and not through himself, being other than the world. (Forgive me, I am forced to say this.) Then in himself he would be incomplete, and in need of the very things over which he is Almighty and Creator.” “Exactly.” “Then we must not accept the deadly error of those who say that God is Almighty and Creator because of the changeable things he rules and creates, rather than through himself.”

SECTION 4

¹ “Consider it this way too. You said: if the world was made later, though he existed before it, then God, who is beyond suffering and change, must have changed. For one who first makes nothing and later makes something must change and be altered, passing from not making to making.” “Yes, I said that.” “Did God ever stop making the world, or not?” “He stopped. For otherwise it would not yet have been completed.” “True.” ² “If, then, passing from not making to making counts as a change in God, does not passing from making to not making count as well?” “Necessarily.” “Would you say he has been changed because he is not making today, compared with when he was making?” “Not at all.” “Then neither, when he was making the world, must he have been changed from what he was when he was not making. And so we are not forced to say that the universe must exist alongside him, since we are not forced to say that he changed. Nor is it eternal with him for that reason.”

SECTION 5

¹ “Tell me this also. Would you call something ‘generated’ if it has no beginning of generation?” “Certainly not. If it is not subject to a beginning of

generation, it is necessarily ungenerated. But if it has come into being, you grant that it came into being by some cause. For it is altogether impossible to come into being without a cause?" "Impossible." ² "Then shall we say that the world, and everything in it, which came into being later and did not exist before, came to be through anyone other than God as its maker?" "Clearly, through God." "For it is impossible that what is bounded by a beginning of generation should be equally unbounded with the unbounded?" "Impossible."

SECTION 6

¹ "So let us discuss it again from the beginning, Centaur. Do you say that things came to be by divine knowledge, or not?" "Fellow," they will say, "not at all." "Then do you say they came from elements, or matter, or foundations, or whatever you want to call them (it makes no difference)? These existed without being generated and were moving about in disorder, and God separated them all out, like a good painter who makes one image out of many colors?" ² "Not that either. For they will do everything to avoid admitting it against themselves. If they granted that matter had a beginning of separation and reshaping, they would be forced by the argument to say that God had in every respect begun to arrange and put in order the matter that was previously shapeless."

SECTION 7

¹ "Come then, since we have reached this point in the discussion (I say it with God's help), suppose there is a statue, a beautiful one, standing on a base. Let those who look at its well-proportioned beauty quarrel with one another, some trying to say that in one respect it is generated and in another respect ungenerated." ² "For I would ask them: For what reason do you call it ungenerated? Is it because of the craftsman, so that he may never be thought to have been idle in his work? Or is it because of the statue itself? If because of the craftsman, how can it be ungenerated if it is being made by the craftsman? For if it stands altogether in need of his skill, being worked in bronze to receive whatever form the maker wishes, how will it be ungenerated, when it is being acted upon and worked? But if instead the statue is said to be complete and ungenerated through itself, and to have no need of skill, then, following their deadly doctrine, they must admit that it came about by chance."

³ “But perhaps they will not accept this argument either, and will answer more sharply. They will say that the statue is not ungenerated, but is generated while always having no beginning of generation, so that the craftsman may be said to rule over his work without beginning. Then, my friends, we will say to them: if no time or age can be found before it, when the statue was not complete, tell us what the craftsman gave it, or what he did to it.”

⁴ For if the statue is without need and has no beginning of coming to be, then on your view the craftsman will turn out never to have made anything while still being a maker. The argument seems to have run around again to the same place: you must admit that things happen by themselves. For if the craftsman is said to have moved the statue even for the briefest instant, it falls under a beginning. At that point he began to move and adorn what was before unadorned and unmoving. So the world, [on your view], both was and will be the same continually and forever. For we must liken the craftsman to God and the statue to the world.

⁵ How then, you fools, do you think that creation, which is endless together with its Creator, has no need of the Creator? What is endless together with another, and has no beginning of coming to be, must also be equally unbegotten and equal in power. And what is unbegotten, shown to be complete in itself and unchangeable, will also be without need and incorruptible. If that is so, then by your own account the world is no longer changeable.

SECTION 8

He says that the church is so named from having turned aside from pleasures.

SECTION 9

The saint says: In what we agreed earlier, we said there are two creative powers. One works from things that do not exist, by bare will and without delay. At the very moment of willing, it accomplishes by itself whatever it wishes to make. This is the Father. The other adorns and varies what has already come into being, in imitation of the first. This is the Son, the all-powerful and mighty hand of the Father, by which he sets in order the matter he has made from nothing.

SECTION 10

The saint says that the book of Job is Moses’.

SECTION 11

¹ Concerning “In the beginning he made heaven and earth,” he says: One would not be wrong to call Wisdom herself the beginning. For in one of the members of the divine chorus she is recorded as speaking of herself this way: “The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways, for his works; before the age he founded me.” ² For it was fitting and consistent that everything that has come into being should be younger than she, since all things came to be through her. Consider whether this also agrees with the words, according to the evangelist, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; this one was in the beginning with God.” ³ We must say that the beginning from which the most upright Word sprang is the Father and Maker of all, in whom the Word was. By “this one was in the beginning with God,” he seems to indicate the authority of the Word, which he had with the Father even before the world came into being, when he says “the beginning.” So after his own beginningless beginning, the Father, the Word himself becomes the beginning of everything else, the one through whom all things are made.

SECTION 12

¹ Origen, after spinning many tales about the eternity of the universe, adds this: “Neither, then, as some say, did man, who did not exist before, first come into the world when he was formed with Adam. Nor did the world begin to be made six days before Adam came into being.” ² But if anyone should care to disagree with these things, let him first say whether the time since the world’s origin, according to the book of Moses, will not be easily counted by those who take it that way. For the prophetic voice cries out here too: “From age to age you are. For a thousand years in your eyes are like yesterday, which has passed, and like a watch in the night.” If a thousand years are confined to one day in God’s eyes, then from the world’s origin until the rest [. . .] until us, about six days are completed. (The six-thousandth

³ year, they say, extends from Adam to here, for they say judgment will come in the seventh, the seven-thousandth year.) So all the days, counted from us back to the “beginning” in which God made heaven and earth, come to thirteen. Before these, by their own folly, [nothing earlier existed, and God would in no way have been stripped] of being Father and Almighty. But if there are only thirteen days in God’s eyes since the world’s origin, how

does the wisdom in Sirach say, “The sand of the seas, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity, who will count them?” Origen says these things in earnest, and see what silly games he plays.

FRAGMENTS ON JOB

SECTION 1

Job 9:2. He says a man can be righteous in comparison with other men. But set beside the Lord of all, “how will a mortal be righteous?” God does not judge as a tyrant. He persuades the one being judged and brings him to be willing to accept his verdict. In fact, when we are judged we shall see the Lord pleading our case with us before the Father, and saying: O man, “what profit is there in my blood, in my going down to corruption?” Come, what have you done that is worthy of this, or of the rest?

SECTION 2

Job 9:5. The “mountains” are Moses and the prophets: “I lifted up my psalms to the mountains.” Christ makes the first covenant old, “and they do not know it” – the Jews, to whom it was said: “If you believed Moses, you would believe me.” The same one also overthrew the mountains of Jerusalem that stood only as far as the letter, and the sanctuary. The same one also dims the sun and the stars by his own brightness.

SECTION 3

Job 9:7. “He who counts the multitudes of the stars.” It is reported that during the three hours in which the sun failed, stars appeared as in the night.

SECTION 4

Job 9:10. What I have said before, he says, is not yet great and not yet unsearchable, since those things are visible.

SECTION 5

Job 25:1. He did not say “or fear of him,” but “or fear from him.” The fear of him is our own work, coming from what is up to us. But the fear from him is “grace and gift,” his own, making up what we lack. The same holds for the words “Add faith to us.” For what we lack, he says, is what comes from your gift, not what is up to us.

SECTION 6

Job 25:3. Let no one think, he says, that God will keep putting off the punishments of the unrighteous to the very end. Even if for now he is patient, he comes upon them unexpectedly, like men lying in ambush. And it is impossible for any of the ungodly to escape the divine justice.

SECTION 7

Job 25:4. He is defending God on the question why he allowed the pirates [that is, the tempters] to tempt us. And he says that a man could not have been righteous if he had no opponent to contend against.

SECTION 8

Job 25:6. Methodius of Sidē takes this as said of Christ, and says: Hear him when he says, “But I am a worm and not a man.” He says “worm,” not because of any evil, but because of his humility, or also, he says, because a worm is not born from a union of two, but from matter lying nearby.

SECTION 9

Job 27:2. Job is convinced that he suffers by God’s judgment. When he says, “As the Lord lives, who has judged me so,” he confesses that the wisdom concerning God’s judgments cannot be grasped, not only by himself but by any human being. He also confesses that the earthly place, defiled by sins, is not able to receive knowledge of God’s counsel. He says this to his friends, who thought they had discovered the reason why he was suffering these things.

SECTION 10

Job 27:3. Methodius takes “the divine Spirit,” given by God to all people, whether righteous or unrighteous, to be the conscience. It pricks the soul over its sins and does not agree with what is done against right reason. Concerning this, he says, John also speaks in his letter: “If our conscience does not condemn us, we have boldness toward God.” What then, he asks, is the thing condemned? For the conscience does not condemn itself, but the soul that sins. Concerning this Solomon also said, “For your incorruptible Spirit is in all things.”

SECTION 11

Job 28:14. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, went down into the abyss, and having gone down was not held. So the “abyss said, It is not in

me,” for he is in heaven. And the sea said, “It is not with me.” This sea is the life of human beings, in which come the shipwrecks of virtue. So if you want wisdom to be with you, even if you are on the sea, tread on the waves. Stretch out your hand to Wisdom, and she will make you walk on top of the waves.

SECTION 12

Job 29:3. That is, for the safety of “my head,” that is, of the mind. For as the head is the chief part in the body, so the mind is the chief part of our soul.

SECTION 13

Job 29:5. When I had, being righteous, he says, the material that was useful to me, I practiced virtue. For I used everything well.

SECTION 14

Job 38:1. The Lord does not speak to people from the beginning. When a soul has been prepared through many things, has been helped by other people and by its own prayer and diligence, has been trained, and has climbed to as great a height as human nature can reach, then the Lord speaks. He reveals his own words to those who have climbed so far. This is how he dealt with Job, for he kept the word back for him like a crown. Let us also look into the phrase “through a whirlwind and clouds.” For it never appears that God spoke through a whirlwind to any of the people before. Now a whirlwind produces a storm. A very great storm had come upon Job. The whole devil had fallen on him, having asked this of God. The speech of his friends was a storm for Job too. In such a storm he stood firm and endured. As a man of understanding, he had gained a helmsman’s skill, and he did not suffer shipwreck “concerning the faith.” For this reason the one who addressed him speaks through a whirlwind, as a symbol of the storm that had overtaken him, in which he also shone out. If Job’s affairs had stayed in that condition, so that he was left suffering these things and departed from life, the Lord would have spoken to him through a whirlwind only. But as it is, his circumstances changed from storm to calm, and he received back the health of his body. For this reason the one who addresses him speaks not only through a whirlwind, but also through clouds.

SECTION 15

Job 38:2. Because the tempter has been defeated, the judge of the contest is proud of his own athlete. He speaks as to one who has been beaten: “Who is this who hides?” To whom does it fit to say this? Job did not hide; he was

godly and holy. But the one he rebukes wants to hide, and supposes that his “plan” is hidden from God. Yet he himself acts as one who hides. For Adam also, when he sinned, thought he could hide from the face of the Lord.

SECTION 16

Job 38:3. It is said as if to the devil: You are a noble fellow! “Gird up your loins like a man, and I will question you.” Do you not believe that I am wiser than you, but think that you are a great mind? For the devil is spoken of in this way by Isaiah: “I will bring it upon the great mind, the ruler of the Assyrians.” So he says to him, “Gird up your loins like a man.” But he does not gird himself. “I will question you, and you answer me.” But he cannot answer him. “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

SECTION 17

Job 38:4. Do you quarrel with me? Do you take your stand against me? Do you contend against my athletes? “Where were you when I was working at the earth?” Who were you then? He says, you had already fallen. For indeed at the beginning of the making of the world, he says, “darkness was over the abyss.” This darkness was not darkness that was created. It began to be darkness by choice, through the loss of light.

SECTION 18

Job 38:5. Not “the measure” but “the measures,” so that he may point out the differences in the earth: one part bears one thing, another bears something else, and another something different again.

SECTION 19

Job 38:6. This blessed father came as far as this point, and here he stops his commentary, so that he found “a cornerstone.” This can also be understood of the only-begotten Son of God, who became flesh for our sake, in line with the saying in the Psalms: “The stone which the builders rejected” (the teachers of the Jews), “this became the head of the corner.” For by the good pleasure of the Father he came on earth and joined together in himself the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, just as the cornerstone binds both walls together.

SECTION 20

Job 38:7. A “great voice” is one that speaks great things, as in the apostle’s words: “See with what large letters I have written to you,” that is, to those to whom he points out such great matters.

SECTION 21

Job 38:16. [Again he has turned his speech to the sea. He does not mean that the sea has a spring; he means that it does not run dry, as if it had a spring.] Many have gone down into the abyss, but they went down to be prisoners, not to walk about in it. Jesus alone walked in the abyss as a free man, where there are no footprints of those who walk. [For he chose death, though he was not liable to it, so that he might ransom those held under death.] And he says to those in chains, “Come out,” [and to those in darkness, “Be uncovered,” with which the following words also agree].

SECTION 22

(Job 40:3) [Do not think that what you have endured was decided by me without reason, and do not reject my judgment. We should remember this saying as useful whenever God decides that we should suffer something: to lose a child, to lose a position of power, to fall sick in the body, or to undergo any such thing. None of these things can happen to us unless God decides it. Since none of them comes about apart from God’s judgment, the sufferer is told, “Do not reject my judgment,” that is, do not deny what I decided concerning you.] Do not suppose, he says, that what you have endured was decided by me without reason. I decided it with foresight of what is good for you. I added the divine declaration to the trials for no other reason than that you might appear righteous, that is, that you might be shown to be what you were.

SECTION 23

(Job 40:10) Learn like an athlete about the dragon, your opponent. (“Beasts” are the opposing powers, concerning whom the prophet prayed, saying, “Do not hand over to the beasts a soul that confesses you.” “Beasts” are the opposing powers, over whom you, O man, have received authority, if you serve God, to tread upon asps and basilisks.)

SECTION 24

(Job 40:16–17) [These things are fuel and food for fire. He lodges especially among those who are worthy of the fire, under the soft, feeble and fruitless souls, which are fuel for fire. . . . Either he means that some great demons, and others lower down in wickedness, live together with him; or that he attacks small and great men alike, creeping under all of them in the same way. For “shoots” are offshoots; so he says “as under the shade of trees.” In this way he rests among these. “And the branches of the chaste tree.” For many people, even after practicing purity, have often come to belong to his portion, like the foolish virgins; for there are also some who live in purity with him.]

SECTION 25

(Job 40:21–22) So that the dragon may hiss no more. [He says this because he was urged by the demons not to throw them into the abyss. Or he says it because the dragon had said to the Lord, “All these things I will save for you.” Or it means that you cannot subdue him so far that he chooses to stop fighting you.] — [The “bracelet” is an adornment of the hand, that is, the good work. So whoever has such a bracelet will pierce the lip of the dragon, the devil who stands opposed, and he will be put to shame, having nothing to say against him.]

ON MARTYRS

SECTION 1

Martyrdom is so wonderful and so greatly admired that the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, honored it by bearing witness, “not counting equality with God something to be grasped,” so that by this gift also he might crown the human being for whose sake he came down.

SECTION 2

The beginning of every good action has its existence in our own will, but its completion is in God.

Shorter Writings of Methodius

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

d. c. AD 311

Bishop and martyr; wrote the Banquet of the Ten Virgins.

I.

But, perhaps, since the friends of Job imagined, that they understood the reason why he suffered such things, that just man, using a long speech to them, confesses that the wisdom of the divine judgment is incomprehensible, not only to him, but also to every man, and declares that this earthly region is not the fitting place for understanding the knowledge of the divine counsels. One might say, that perfect and absolute piety—a thing plainly divine, and of God alone given to man, is in this place called wisdom. But the sense of the words is as follows: God, he says, hath given great things unto men, sowing, as it were, in their nature the power of discovery, together with wisdom, and the faculty of art. And men having received this, dig metals out of the earth, and cultivate it; but that wisdom which is conjoined with piety, it is not possible in any place to discover. Man cannot obtain it from his own resources, nor can he give it unto others. Hence it was that the wise men of the Greeks, who in their own strength sought to search out piety, and the worship of the Deity, did not attain their end. For it is a thing, as we have said, which exceeds human strength, the gift and the grace of God; and therefore from the beginning, partly by visions, partly by the intervention of angels, partly by the discourses of the divinely-inspired prophets, God instructed man in the principles of true religion. Nay, moreover, that contemplative wisdom by which we are impelled to the arts, and to other pursuits, and with which we are all in common, just and unjust, alike endued, is the gift of God: if we have been made rational creatures, we have received this. Wherefore, also, in a former place it was said, as of a thing that is of God bestowed, "Is it not the Lord who teacheth understanding and knowledge?"

II.

Observe that the Lord was not wont from the beginning to speak with man; but after that the soul was prepared, and exercised in many ways, and had ascended into the height by contemplation, so far as it is possible for human nature to ascend, then is it His wont to speak, and to reveal His Word unto those who have attained unto this elevation. But since the whirlwind is the producer of the tempests, and Job, in the tempest of his afflictions, had not made shipwreck of his faith, but his constancy shone forth the rather; therefore it was that He who gave him an answer answered him by the whirlwind, to signify the tempest of calamity which had befallen him; but, because He changed the stormy condition of his affairs into one of serene tranquillity, He spoke to him not only by the whirlwind, but in clouds also.

III.

Many have descended into the deep, not so as to walk on it, but so as to be by its bonds restrained. Jesus alone walked on the deep, where there are no traces of walkers, as a free man. For He chose death, to which He was not subject, that He might deliver those who were the bondslaves of death; saying to the prisoners, "Go forth; and to them that are in darkness, show yourselves." With which, also, the things which follow are consistent.

IV.

Seest thou how, at the end of the contest, with a loud proclamation he declares the praises of the combatant, and discovers that which was in his afflictions hidden. in the words: "Thinkest thou that I had else answered thee, but that thou shouldest appear just? " This is the salve of his wounds, this the reward of his patience. For as to what followed, although he received double his former possessions, these may seem to have been given him by divine providence as small indeed, and for trifling causes, even though to some they may appear great.

FRAGMENT, UNCERTAIN.

Thou contendest with Me, and settest thyself against Me, and opposest those who combat for Me. But where weft thou when I made the world? What wert thou then? Hadst thou yet, says He, fallen from thy mother? for there was darkness, in the beginning of the world's creation, He says, upon the face of the deep. Now this darkness was no created darkness, but one which of set purpose had place, by reason of the absence of light.

V.

But Methodius: The Holy Spirit, who of God is given to all men, and of whom Solomon said, "For Thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things," He receives for the conscience, which condemns the offending soul.

VI. THE SAME METHODIUS.

I account it a greater good to be reproved than to reprove, inasmuch as it is more excellent to free oneself from evil than to free another.

VII. THE SAME METHODIUS.

Human nature cannot clearly perceive pure justice in the soul, since, as to many of its thoughts, it is but dim-sighted.

VIII. THE SAME METHODIUS.

Wickedness never could recognise virtue or its own self.

IX. THE SAME METHODIUS.

Justice, as it seems, is four square, on all sides equal and like. The just judgment of God is accommodated to our affections; and such as our estate is, proportionate and similar shall the retribution be which is allotted us.

I.

The beginning of every good action has its foundation in our wills, but the conclusion is of God.

II.

Perhaps these three persons of our ancestors, being in an image the consubstantial representatives of humanity, are, as also Methodius thinks, types of the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, the innocent and unbegotten Adam being the type and resemblance of God the Father Almighty, who is uncaused, and the cause of all; his begotten son shadowing forth the image of the begotten Son and Word of God; whilst Eve, that proceedeth forth from Adam, signifies the person and procession of the Holy Spirit.

THE BANQUET OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Or, Concerning Chastity. — Persons of the Dialogue: Euboulios, Gregorion, Arete; Marcella, Theophila, Thaleia, Theopatra, Thallousa, Agathe, Procilla, Thekla, Tusiane, Domnina. — Introduction.—Plan of the Work; Way to Paradise; Description and Personification of Virtue; The Agnos a Symbol of Chastity; Marcella, the Eldest and Foremost Among the Virgins of Christ.

¹ Euboulios. You have arrived most seasonably, Gregorion, for I have just been looking for you, wanting to hear of the meeting of Marcella and Theopatra, and of the other virgins who were present at the banquet, and of the nature of their discourses on the subject of chastity; for it is said that they argued with such ability and power that there was nothing lacking to the full consideration of the subject. If, therefore, you have come here for any other purpose, put that off to another time, and do not delay to give us a complete and connected account of the matter of which we are inquiring. Gregorion. I seem to be disappointed of my hope, as some one else has given you intelligence beforehand on the subject respecting which you ask me. For I thought that you had heard nothing of what had happened, and I was flattering myself greatly with the idea that I should be the first to tell you of it. And for this reason I made all haste to come here to you, fearing the very thing which has happened, that some one might anticipate me.

² Euboulios. Be comforted, my excellent friend, for we have had no precise information respecting anything which happened; since the person who brought us the intelligence had nothing to tell us, except that there had been dialogues; but when he was asked what they were, and to what purpose, he did not know. Gregorion. Well then, as I came here for this reason, do you want to hear all that was said from the beginning; or shall I pass by parts of it, and recall only those points which I consider worthy of mention? Euboulios. By no means the latter; but first, Gregorion, relate to us from the very beginning where the meeting was, and about the setting forth of the viands, and about yourself, how you poured out the wine "They in golden cups Each other pledged, while towards broad heaven they looked." Gregorion. You are always skilful in discussions, and excessively powerful in argument—thoroughly confuting all your adversaries.

³ Euboulios. It is not worth while, Gregorion, to contend about these things at present; but do oblige us by simply telling us what happened from the beginning. Gregorion. Well, I will try. But first answer me this: You

know, I presume, Arete, the daughter of Philosophia? Euboulios. Why do you ask? 4Gregorion. "We went by invitation to a garden of hers with an eastern aspect, to enjoy the fruits of the season, myself, and Procilla, and Tusiane. I am repeating the words of Theopatra, for it was of her I obtained the information. "We went, Gregorion, by a very rough, steep, and arduous path: when we drew near to the place," said Theopatra, "we were met by a tall and beautiful woman walking along quietly and gracefully, clothed in a shining robe as white as snow. Her beauty was something altogether inconceivable and divine. Modesty, blended with majesty, bloomed on her countenance. It was a face," she said, "such as I know not that I had ever seen, awe-inspiring, yet tempered with gentleness and mirth; for it was wholly unadorned by art, and had nothing counterfeit. She came up to us, and, like a mother who sees her daughters after a long separation, she embraced and kissed each one of us with great joy, saying, 'O, my daughters you have come with toil and pain to me who am earnestly longing to conduct you to the pasture of immortality; toilsomely have you come by a way abounding with many frightful reptiles; for, as I looked, I saw you often stepping aside, and I was fearing lest you should turn back and slip over the precipices.

5 But thanks to the Bridegroom to whom I have espoused you, my children, for having granted an effectual answer to all our prayers.' And, while she is thus speaking," said Theopatra, "we arrive at the enclosure, the doors not being shut as yet, and as we enter we come upon Thekla and Agathe and Marcella preparing to sup. And Arete immediately said, 'Do you also come hither, and sit down here in your place along with these your fellows.' Now," said she to me, "we who were there as guests were altogether, I think, ten in number; and the place was marvellously beautiful, and abounding in the means of recreation. The air was diffused in soft and regular currents, mingled with pure beams of light, and a stream flowing as gently as oil through the very middle of the garden, threw up a most delicious drink; and the water flowing from it, transparent and pure, formed itself into fountains, and these, overflowing like rivers, watered all the garden with their abundant streams; and there were different kinds of trees there, full of fresh fruits, and the fruits that hung joyfully from their branches were of equal beauty; and there were ever-blooming meadows strewn with variegated and sweet-scented flowers, from which came a gentle breeze laden with sweetest

odour. And the agnos grew near, a lofty tree, under which we reposed, from its being exceedingly wide-spreading and shady."

6 Euboulios. You seem to me, my good friend, to be making a revelation of a second paradise. Gregorion. You speak truly and wisely. "When there," she said, "we had all kinds of food and a variety of festivities, so that no delight was wanting. After this Arete, entering, gave utterance to these words:- "Young maidens, the glory of my greatness, beautiful virgins, who tend the undefiled meadows of Christ with unwedded hands, we have now had enough of food and feasting, for all things are abundant and plentiful with us. What is there, then, besides which I wish and expect? That each of you shall pronounce a discourse in praise of virginity. Let Marcella begin, since she sits in the highest place, and is at the same time the eldest. I shall be ashamed of myself if I do not make the successful disputant an object of envy, binding her with the unfading flowers of wisdom.'

7 "And then," I think she said, "Marcella immediately began to speak as follows."

I.

1 Methodius, Bishop, to those who say: What doth it profit us that the Son of God was crucified upon earth, and made man? And wherefore did He endure to suffer in the manner of the cross, and not by some other punishment? And what was the advantage of the cross? 2 Christ, the Son of God, by the command of the Father, became conversant with the visible creature, in order that, by overturning the dominion of the tyrants, the demons, that is, He might deliver our souls from their dreadful bondage, by reason of which our whole nature, intoxicated by the draughts of iniquity, had become full of tumult and disorder, and could by no means return to the remembrance of good and useful things. Wherefore, also, it was the more easily carried away to idols, inasmuch as evil had overwhelmed it entirely, and had spread over all generations, on account of the change which had come over our fleshy tabernacles in consequence of disobedience; until Christ, the Lord, by the flesh in which He lived and appeared, weakened the force of Pleasure's onslaughts, by means of which the infernal powers that were in arms against us reduced our minds to slavery, and freed mankind from all their evils. For with this end the Lord Jesus both wore our flesh, and became man, and by the divine dispensation was nailed to the cross; in order that by the flesh in which the demons had proudly and falsely feigned themselves gods, having

carried our souls captive unto death by deceitful wiles, even by this they might be overturned, and discovered to be no gods. For he prevented their arrogance from raising itself higher, by becoming man;

³ in order that by the body in which the race possessed of reason had become estranged from the worship of the true God, and had suffered injury, even by the same receiving into itself in an ineffable manner the Word of Wisdom, the enemy might be discovered to be the destroyers and not the benefactors of our souls. For it had not been wonderful if Christ, by the terror of His divinity, and the greatness of His invincible power, had reduced to weakness the adverse nature of the demons. But since this was to cause them greater grief and torment, for they would have preferred to be overcome by one stronger than themselves, therefore it was that by a man He procured the safety of the race; in order that men, after that very Life and Truth had entered into them in bodily form, might be able to return to the form and light of the Word, overcoming the power of the enticements of sin; and that the demons, being conquered by one weaker than they, and thus brought into contempt, might desist from their over-bold confidence, their hellish wrath being repressed.

⁴ It was for this mainly that the cross was brought in, being erected as a trophy against iniquity, and a deterrent from it, that henceforth man might be no longer subject to wrath, after that he had made up for the defeat which, by his disobedience, he had received, and had lawfully conquered the infernal powers, and by the gift of God had been set free from every debt. Since, therefore, the first-born Word of God thus fortified the manhood in which He tabernacled with the armour of righteousness, He overcame, as has been said, the powers that enslaved us by the figure of the cross, and showed forth man, who had been oppressed by corruption, as by a tyrant power, to be free, with unfettered hands. For the cross, if you wish to define it, is the confirmation of the victory, the way by which God to man descended, the trophy against material spirits, the repulsion of death, the foundation of the ascent to the true day; and the ladder for those who are hastening to enjoy the light that is there, the engine by which those who are fitted for the edifice of the Church are raised up from below, like a stone four square, to be compacted on to the divine Word. Hence it is that our kings, perceiving that the figure of the cross is used for the dissipating of every evil, have made vex-

illas, as they are called in the Latin language. Hence the sea, yielding to this figure, makes itself navigable to men.

5 For every creature, so to speak, has, for the sake of liberty, been marked with this sign; for the birds which fly aloft, form the figure of the cross by the expansion of their wings; and man himself, also, with his hands outstretched, represents the same. Hence, when the Lord had fashioned him in this form, in which He had from the beginning flamed him, He joined on his body to the Deity, in order that it might be henceforth an instrument consecrated to God, freed from all discord and want of harmony. For man cannot, after that he has been formed for the worship of God, and hath sung, as it were, the incorruptible song of truth, and by this hath been made capable of holding the Deity, being fitted to the lyre of life as the chords and strings, he cannot, I say, return to discord and corruption.

II.

The Same Methodius to Those Who are Ashamed of the Cross of Christ.

1 Some think that God also, whom they measure with the measure of their own feelings, judges the same thing that wicked and foolish men judge to be subjects of praise and blame, and that He uses the opinions of men as His rule and measure, not taking into account the fact that, by reason of the ignorance that is in them, every creature falls short of the beauty of God. For He draws all things to life by His Word, from their universal substance and nature. For whether He would have good, He Himself is the Very Good, and remains in Himself; or, whether the beautiful is pleasing to Him, since He Himself is the Only Beautiful, He beholds Himself, holding in no estimation the things which move the admiration of men. That, verily, is to be accounted as in reality the most beautiful and praiseworthy, which God Himself esteems to be beautiful, even though it be contemned and despised by all else—not that which men fancy to be beautiful. Whence it is, that although by this figure He hath willed to deliver the soul from corrupt affections, to the signal putting to shame of the demons, we ought to receive it, and not to speak evil of it, as being that which was given us to deliver us, and set us free from the chains which for our disobedience we incurred.

2 For the Word suffered, being in the flesh affixed to the cross, that He might bring man, who had been deceived by error, to His supreme and god-like majesty, restoring him to that divine life from which he had become alienated. By this figure, in truth, the passions are blunted; the passion of the

passions having taken place by the Passion, and the death of death by the death of Christ, He not having been subdued by death, nor overcome by the pains of the Passion. For neither did the Passion cast Him down from His equanimity, nor did death hurt Him, but He was in the passible remaining impassible, and in the mortal remaining immortal, comprehending all that the air, and this middle state, and the heaven above contained, and attempering the mortal to the immortal divinity. Death was vanquished entirely; the flesh being crucified to draw forth its immortality.

III.

The Same Methodius: How Christ the Son of God, in a Brief and Definite Time, Being Enclosed by the Body, and Existing Impassible, Became Obnoxious to the Passion.

¹For since this virtue was in Him, now it is of the essence of power to be contracted in a small space, and to be diminished, and again to be expanded in a large space, and to be increased. But if it is possible for Him to be with the larger extended, and to be made equal, and yet not with the smaller to be contracted and diminished, then power is not in Him. For if you say that this is possible to power, and that impossible, you deny it to be power; as being infirm and incapable with regard to the things which it cannot do. Nor again, further, will it ever contain any excellence of divinity with respect to those things which suffer change. For both man and the other animals, with respect to those things which they can effect, energise; but with respect to those things which they cannot perform, are weak, and fade away. Wherefore for this cause the Son of God was in the manhood enclosed, because this was not impossible to Him. For with power He suffered, remaining impassible; and He died, bestowing the gift of immortality upon mortals. Since the body, when struck or cut by a body, is just so far struck or cut as the striker strikes it, or he that cuts it cut it. For according to the rebound of the thing struck, the blow reflects upon the striker, since it is necessary that the two must suffer equally, both the agent and the sufferer.

²If, in truth, that which is cut, from its small size, does not correspond to that which cuts it, it will not be able to cut it at all. For if the subject body does not resist the blow of the sword, but rather yields to it, the operation will be void of effect, even as one sees in the thin and subtle bodies of fire and air; for in such cases the impetus of the more solid bodies is relaxed, and remains without effect. But if fire, or air, or stone, or iron, or anything which

men use against themselves for the purposes of mutual destruction-if it is not possible to pierce or divide these, because of the subtle nature which they possess, why should not rather Wisdom remain invulnerable and impassible, in nothing injured by anything, even though it were conjoined to the body which was pierced and transfixed with nails, inasmuch as it is purer and more excellent than any other nature, if you except only that of God who begat Him?

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Fragments on Jonah and on Things Created

English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made. *Licence: Public domain.*

Fragments: Against Porphyry, On Created Things, On Job, On Martyrs

Greek text: D.G. Nathanael Bonwetsch's edition (Methodius, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1917), 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.*

Shorter Writings of Methodius

English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made. *Licence: Public domain.*